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RI KRISHNA

he Soul of Humanity

A Critical Study of His Life and Genius

SRI KRISHNA
THE SOUL OF HUMANITY

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A CRITICAL STUDY OF HIS LIFE AND GENIUS

BY

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AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

THIS critical study of Sri Krishna's Life and Genius is meant primarily to serve as an introduction to the larger and more comprehensive study of the Lord's religion of Love, Liberty and Sacrifice. *The Supreme Religion of Sri Krishna* is the title of the forthcoming volume whose detailed contents are given in the last page of this book. Sri Krishna is the quintessence of India's spiritual civilisation, the sublimest synthesis and embodiment of the noblest and the best that the illustrious land of Bharata-varsha has ever given out of her inmost heart and soul to God and Collective Humanity; and the Bhagavad-Gita is not by itself sufficient to illustrate the more truly religious, as different from philosophic, aspects of the Highest Avatar's Life and Teachings. The eternal joy emanating from the humble Cradle at Gokula, the ineffable radiance of the Beauty-Boy of Brindavan, the ever heightening melodies of the Soul-Rapture of Radha are drowned in the thunder, obscured and beclouded in the din and dust of the battle-field of Kurukshetra where the stern Voice of God sounded the deathless song of liberty in activity, joy in sacrifice and righteousness as

the be-all and end-all of human existence. The Divine Charioteer of Partha was no less eloquent and heavenly tongued in His sublime discourses on subjects of universal interest and importance with the Emperor Yudhistira, whose heart-homage and adoration He drew to Himself in no less measure than His own heart gave to the pure and proud Empress Draupadi, the Passion-incarnate Goddess. The Cow-herd Prince of Vraja is the princeliest of all mankind, the supremest prophet, poet and philosopher, all combined in one; and He is as much of an ideal king, statesman and warrior as He is undoubtedly the most universally acclaimed Friend and Playmate, Lover and Beloved, Redeemer and Saviour of every human heart. The religion of Sri Krishna comprises all the loftiest elements of the human heart, mind and soul, and the true divinity of His Life is made manifest not so much even by the recorded doings and sayings of His individual person as by the everlong and ever-growing, the hallowed holiest loves and aspirations, dreams and ideals, which His name and example, His Godliest Personality, has been productive of since the day of His birth full five thousand years back and promises to be still more so in the future ages of World-Democracy and Universal Brother-Sisterhood.

India stands nothing more in need of to-day than a moral dynamic and spiritual religion of instinctive persuation and immediate practice. The Vedas are good in themselves but they become truly spiritual and

their truths become really sacred only when the recorded experiences of the holy Rishis gain the sanction and affirmation of our own individnal and living experiences. All art, religion and government is for the good of life and the Greatest Wisest Teacher and the Highest Holiest Anthority is the Father of all Rishis, the Seer of all Seers, the Living God of eternal and ever-growing experience who is the one and only Source of all divine intnitions and sacred revelations and the ultimate Goal of all human aspirations. It is rank blasphemy to exalt *Social inequality* as the original design of the Infinite Heart and Intelligence; it is unabashed idiocy that seeks to perpetnate the deadly sins of pride, arrogance and callousness on a metaphysical basis; but it is nothing less than the most degraded savagery and loathsome materialism that enables the earthly priests and earth-born kings to feed fat on the unpaid, unhonoured and enforced labour of their human brothers and sisters, to drink fast and drain the life-blood of the whole nation to their own filthy stomach's content, to please themselves with and parade before the world their perfumed precepts, pompons pedigrees and personal vainglory.

India of the future shall not tolerate tyranny of any kind. The awakening, growing India shall rid herself free of the all-corrupting evils of caste-pride and sex-jealousy even though they are of long continned and established existence. The very Himalayas shall be uprooted from their place, even as the

ancient hill of Govardhana, and be made a weapon of offence or object of attack when the Genius of Human Life, armed with the strength of the earth and sky and irrepressible Hope, demands the instant removal of all barriers to the boundless love of its ever-expanding and ever-throbbing Heart. Sri Krishna is the highest representative and Avatar of the Supreme God of Love. He is the only accredited Prophet of the world who held Women in the highest respect and looked upon them as the born saviours of their ruder brothers. He is the Genius of East and West, of ancient Bharatavarsha and Hellas, combined in one and He alone of all the greatest born teachers, leaders and rulers of mankind had possessed in His Person the noblest elements of Truth, Good and Beauty. The religion of Sri Krishna is the religion of every genuine human heart and conscience and He it is who has unreservedly proclaimed Himself to be *one in aim and origin* with all the most sacred Prophets and Teachers, Poets and Preceptors, of every land and age. India's salvation lies in living up to the ideal of Sri Krishna and India's largest, richest and fullest national life and ability to enforce the League of Human Brotherhood shall become realised only when the submerged kingdom of Golden Dwaraka is built again on Earth on the deep foundations of brotherly-sisterly love, only when the boundaries of the human heart and sentiment are enlarged as broad and wide as to encircle the whole earth and surround all

continents, only when every righteous soul is ready to fight his or *her* Kurukshetra in defence of our moral Being's innate and eternal privilege, and only when we look upon ourselves both as the responsible agents and resultant events in the Unending Process whose eternal and ever-growing theme is the more and more cultivation and growth of Godly Love and Adorable Loveliness.

The crown and flower of Hinduism is the burning confession of the human heart of its inalienable kinship with the Eternal God, the blood-red reality of our holiest loves, the unfading beauty of the ever-expanding aspiration which is our very life-breath and throbbing pulse ; the inward core and conscience of the highest Hinduism is not a logical solution of the distinction between Being and Non-Being, *Sat* and *Asat*, is not a theory of creation or of divine dispensation and providence, is not even the immemorial belief in Rebirth, Bondage and Liberation—the essence of Hinduism is the highest, noblest poetry of all wisdom and heart's spontaneous love, of all inspiration and eternal striving. The poetic philosophy of Hinduism proclaims in undoubted language the positive presence of Divinity which is the basic background of all existence, reveals the glory of godliness immanent in the humblest dust, and draws out of every living, moving heart the undying thirst for the Adorable God of all loves Who is us and ours, all worlds and things, all possibilities of change and

growth, all infinite variations and evolutions, and is ever yet in Himself the Potential-most-Potential, the Ideal-most-Ideal and the Real-most-Real of all facts and deeds, activities and aspirations. He, Whose Truth the Vedas try in vain to exhaust, Whose Nature the learned try in vain to define, Whose Manifestations the scientists try in vain to measure and predict, Whose Heart is the abode of all life, in and within Whom live and grow the Infinite Universes of which this ours of galactic make is but a unit, the Beauty-God of Adorable Loveliness, the Love-God of all Loves, may He, The NARAYANA OF THE MOVING WATERS, inspire our little mortal hearts with more of divine energy, swell our life's wings with more of ambitious hope and holy ardour; may He grant us the liberty of our own loves, the strength of our human nature and the joy of living experience; and may He fulfil to our full knowledge and to everybody's satisfaction the divinity of love and righteousness by letting them be the sole arbiters of our lives!

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THE SONGS OF NARADA IN PRAISE OF BALA MUKUNDA

(COMMUNICATED FROM HEAVEN)

AND TO BE SUNG TO THE ACCOMPANIMENT OF HIS DIVINE LYRE

I

THERE is a music in my heart which is nothing other than the mute praise of the Lord. I know not how to praise Him who is all Praises and Anthems, Social Good and Supreme Joy!

I think myself a musician when I hear His Divine Melody and though my mortal heart is mute and dumb with wonderment, it is blest with the most powerful expression.

I think myself a poet when I read the Poetry of His Life. I run with His playmates and discover Him hiding in the hidden corners of my heart—His Glory illumines its darkest chambers!—I behold Him running from corner to corner and, behold, my heart throbs the more quickly in chime with His soft, sly foot-steps.

II

I saw Him once a Child not bigger than any mortal babe, so frail, so tender and fragile! The Storms blew over His Face—yet stirred not the least hair of His tiny head. The Fires of Destruction caught hold of His swaddling clothes—yet, behold, the Furies fled into the darkness ere He stretched His little hand to catch hold of the shining flame. The Running Accident ran over His baby breast and fain would have cut a groove deep into His living heart—but the Accident was nowhere to be seen ere the Child had chuckled at the sight of that toy. The All-Devouring Bird of greed and avarice came to peck at His soft flesh and tear Him to pieces—yet, at every repeated strike the Bird's bill bent itself double and went more and more inside, till at last the whole head and beak was inside its own ravenous maw!

The Woman of Death with hate and poison came to kill Him, beheld Him and fell in love with Him as she fixed her mind upon His Lovely Face! She sought Him in her arms and felt His sweetest touch—her poisonous heart had broken ere it had ceased to throb, her hateful life had ceased ere she had breathed the last breath; her clasping hands administered the medicine of His Merciful Mouth, her venomous blood was lost in the nectar-sea of His Love—Oh, she was cured of all deadly aches and ills and found rest in eternal life.

III

The Child of Mischief, the sportive boy, He is Activity incarnate in Human Form! He runs through the secret doors of narrow veins and capillaries and would not have the Human Heart shut against His Face. The heart is His playground, feast and joy; the heart's stored milk is His by eternal right! The Cows' plenteous milk is His, He the milch-calf of every mother's breast! He breaks the heart's milk-pot, He breaks the Heart full hundred times an hour and drinks the richest cream of all consecrated loves and joys. He drinks from the heart's cup the purest milk of human kindliness, He drinks the whiles the heart is churning, the whiles it is active with the fresh foam and bubble of rising hopes and outbursting ambitions—He waits inside the heart's pot to receive the last drop of tears when the task is successfully done and *then* He breaks it and runs away with the collected cream!

IV

Now He is a Youth, He breaks the many vessels of more costly make than the humble milk-pots. The Maidens of Rising Breasts, they seem to have stolen His stolen cream and seem to keep it there just beneath their soft covering silk! Do they conceal the secret or reveal it with their shy covering hands

when the blowing gusts of the spring feels the lightness of their flowing robes and their heart's growing heaviness? Do they smile or sigh with the rising weight of their breasts, do they feel ashamed of the loves they have secretly harboured, do they confess in stealth whose wealth of youth and beauty tempts them the more, do they steal evermore and waylay Him for His looks of lustrous eyes, do *they* tempt the Beauteous Youth and trick Him to more thefts of His guileless smiles—or is *He* the Arch-Thief and Eternal Lover, the Unseen Ravisher of all maidenly dreams, the Entrancing Spirit that inspires the heart ere it begins to throb, the God and Creator of all love-vows and love-songs, the Engenderer and Entertainer, the Author and Witness of all love-inspired breaths, sighs, looks, lies, tricks and trifle-seeming gestures of magic import: is He not the Magician whom the Maidens tempt, tempted in truth beyond their own ken and walking blindly behind and before, caught by the light of His enchanting smiles?

V

The Many-Headed Serpent of envy, lust and intolerance, the lord and possessor of life's rich fields and nourishing waters, he looked at the humble Cowherd-Boy with proud uplifted head and hissed many an orthodox hiss at Him and all who dared to trespass into his privileged boundary of ancestral

domains and heaven-appointed heritage: the proud king and aristocrat, the high priest and pontiff, he exposed his many weapons of fiery breaths, forked tongues and poisonous fangs and threatened to set his teeth into the vitals of the low-born intruder—when lo, his head turned giddy with the weight of his own pride, his neck he had strained and twisted by trying to look high, his blood-vessels had burst with the fury of his own blind rage—his crown drops from his head and then he bends, he bends, obsequiously to the light touch of His established supremacy, he begs with coward fear for the safety of his life and property; he brings his women and children, his blooming daughters and suckling babes, and begs to appeal to the great Victor's heart of mercy, he incites his women to bewail and coax by turns, he bites his own children to cry and cry and earn forsooth the pity of the All-conquering Hero—the lament of tortured children, the sad plight of virgin maidens, the sore tears of devoted wives and the true sorrows of the true-loving mothers move the deep moving heart of the Divine Melodist who sings not the proud song of victory but from His supreme dominion proclaims the sevenfold greatness of love and sympathy, tolerance and equality of opportunity: the Mightiest Heart of Mercy, the Strongest Arm of Sympathy, He, the Divine Lord of Love, cleared the running stream and life's broad highway of the Serpent—Sovereignty and Selfish

Autocracy and let the conquered tribe live in human peace and industry in a field of their own labour.

VI

Blow, blow, thou Music, softly blow and let the running Jumna mix her deep waters with thy bursting melody! Let each drop of the running stream of life, let each throb of the heaving heart, each flowing moment and passing sensation, possess in full the sweetness that comes out of harmonious movement, march and rhythm. Let each breath that blows into the hollow fluted heart bring forth such rapturous voice and thrilling song! Behold, the world is being drowned by the surging Jumna that runs not but overflows; her running current refuses to leave the land and air made liquid by the melting sounds. Behold the rays of moonlight like naked damsels speed in troops and torrents from the midnight orb to bathe themselves in the rising flood of joy; the cold and beauteous moon feels itself hot and feverish and fain would jump on the melody—drowned earth, such a heaven the earth seems when looked from high.

VII

Sing, sing, Thou Master Dancer, sing and move the world with Thy Moving Heart and Feet. Let

Thy Melody prevail with all men and beasts and over extended space; ay, let it sink as milk within the mouth and swell the heart of every atom and ion, swell the full tide of the nebulous seas and starry floods and let them move and dance with new impulsing song—let the whole choir of creation burst into one spontaneous song and sing in unison the eternal anthem of Love!

VIII

The Lord of Love, Him, Him, the Eternal Child, we worship none than Him. The Milky ocean is stored within His Heart and He is Himself cradled within each moving drop. His nimble Feet dance from heart to heart, from flower to flower and joy to joy, and He feeds His hungry Heart with the flowing honey, flower-dust and nectar, with the living blood's richest brewing joy, that wet His Feet—such tears of true love and joy He kisses with His softest Mouth, to such loving tributes He bends His Head—He feeds, He feeds on the love we give, He grows with our growing loves, He smiles and laughs when our heart is pure—He clings, He clings to the ever dear heart and throws His hands and feet in ecstatic embrace.

IX

O Love Divine and Beauteous Child born of all ripening beauties and growing womb of Time.

O Thou Godly Growth and Growth of Godliness, ALL GLORIOUS CHILD! the Zodiac-zone of stellar belt is cinctured round Thy slender waist; the clustered stars and galactic systems are the radiant pearls born of Thy heart's own heat and sportive joy; the spreading seas and nebular streams, the milky oceans of boundless existence are merged in Thy blood and softly feed Thy tiny veins of entrancing hue! Thou growest with every change and outlivest all eternity and Thou growest the Younger, Lovelier, Godlier, day by day. Thy Heart is Love, Thy Name is Love, Love informs Thy Form and Figure, Love's Blush of Beauty with the light of million million suns glows with the Joy of Thy expected Kiss!

I. SRI KRISHNA, THE SOUL OF HUMANITY

A CRITICAL STUDY OF HIS LIFE AND GENIUS

Introduction

Sri Krishna is deservedly called the Divine Avatar

The genius of Sri Krishna is transcendentally divine. It could stand the test of eternity and universal experience. Though his life and biographical details have much of the local Indian colour and atmosphere, his genius is out and out universal. His profound philosophy of life and conduct, his basic principles of natural living, *his ethics of growth and economy of happiness,* his ideals of society and government, his fearless advocacy of the equality of all men and women, his singular and superhuman love of the beautiful, the true and the good, and above all his saintly devotion to the cause of womanhood and the all dignified attitude of chivalry that lasted through his life-time, have won for him an abiding place in the memory of mankind: and few deserve a more hallowed

niche in the heart and brain of all living men and women than the Humble Cowherd of the Brindaban, the eternal type of the evergrowing childhood and youth of Humanity. The Prophet of Dwaraka and the Potent Friend of the Pandavas, the Charioteer of Partha and the Saintly Brother of Radha, the Heroic Spouse of Rugmini and the Honoured Confidant of Draupadi, was an exceptional genius of the highest order of intelligence and personal magnetism. He easily takes his rank among the very best and elect of the whole civilised world and if ever a person lived to see himself worshipped by men of all grades of learning, persuasion and belief, if ever in the history of mankind a person has made himself dear and popular to the minds of all his believers and disciples for succeeding generations and ages with increasing force of approbation, if there be one name and life-history that evokes equal enthusiasm from all the varied ranks of the two hundred and twenty millions of Hindus, it is the name and life history of Him who is known as the Eighth Incarnation and Avatar of the Most High !

The Difference between the Ordinary Prophets and Avatars

The prophets of all nations can be compared to volcanoes in their energy, inspiration and ethical fire. And rightly do they assume such gigantic

proportions when measured by the extent and power of their influence on the actions and ideals of their fellowmen. As the hard crust and outer rind of the earth conceals her fiery heart inside, the outward conventions and institutions of civilised societies conceal the moral fire and burning blood that had gone once to their making and still feeds the living, growing souls of all men and women. As the earliest rocks were fire-formed, so too the early human institutions and social usages were the results of high ethical inspirations and moral fervour. But even as the earth has ceased to be a fire-work of Heaven ejecting forth infinite mass of molten metal and steam through the thousand and ten thousand craters and fumaroles that once found a place at every point of her all incandescent sphere, the civilised society has ceased to give birth in twos and fives at a time to those Heaven-born, Heaven-bitten, Heaven-mad souls who brought as their birthright hunger for eternal life, who breathed fire and invigorating hope around them, sought faith in all its holiness and fervid reality and achieved supremacy by spontaneous strength and sacrifice. Prophets there have been many all over the world as well as volcanoes and from what we know of the present conditions of the earth and the humanity that lives upon it, perhaps it is not untrue to say that we cannot have in future as many of them both as we have had in the past. The days of prophets are not

dead and gone and prophets there still would be born here and there at unexpected times and places and scatter the empyrean fire around them. But prophets have ceased to be born in close succession and ceased to reign as a class. Their commandments are not now implicitly obeyed in full faith and their words of passionate counsel are valued more for their vivid phrasing. The priest has usurped the prophet's place and he did steal the sacred throne from behind. The prophets were sincere and natural sons of the earth. They were men of strong impulses, it is true, but also of sublime purposes. They evoked spontaneous convictions and commanded our soul's obedience by their supreme excellence of God-given simplicity. There was nothing artificial about them, no underhand scheme, no personal motives and petty aims, Their hearts were writ large on their radiant faces and whenever they prayed, prophesied or rhapsodised, there was a joy, an elevation and an exalted sense of holiness, such as drew men and societies more near to Heaven than ever before.

An Avatar is a God-born, all round genius of the highest excellence who combines in himself the ethical fire and energy of the prophets as well as the supreme intelligence and sympathy of the poets. The prophet is a man of deep convictions; but oftentimes his convictions are very limited in dimensions. The prophets are very vehement in their injunctions and are intolerant of opposition. They are the

offspring of fire and absorbing energy and they exact homage from all their followers and often extort it. They seek power, not for themselves it is true, but they crush all originality of individual persuasion and belief. They are the first divine law-givers, the first great commanders and leaders of mankind who have laid the foundations of ethical and human civilisations. But we cannot have a house with mere foundations; we are never satisfied with mere promises and beginnings and once we start on the race course of life we are eager to run the whole circuit and earn immortal fame by our individual achievements. Here comes the poet who sings the praise of the adventurer and binds the wreath of glory round the hero's head and person with his golden flowers of poetry. Whereas the prophet suppresses the individuality of others, the poet stimulates the ambitions of each and all and gains himself in strength and superiority by the elevation and appreciation of those benefitted by him. In the poet's world there is enough scope for all of us and it is the very essence of poetic beauty that there should be as many varied elements as possible. The poet is the child of light and colour, of imagination and insight, of sympathy and stimulating influence. The poet's highest gift is intelligence, the steady light and effulgence of interpenetrative power, the spiritual vision that beholds the whole world as the One and the All, as the visible

expression of an Evergrowing Beauty and as the expansive process of one divine experience which contributes to the growth of God. The poets beautify our experiences of every kind, reveal to us the secrets which lie scattered around us and enable us to build heavens and earths of our own. As long as there is sunlight and human experience, poets there will be born on earth to bask in the glory of the one and reveal the beauty of the other.

An Avatar is that rarest phenomenon of a prophet and poet combined in one and he is the more of each for being both in unison and possesses the double-doubled power and personality of both together.

Avatar is a Term Expressive of the Highest Possible Human Evolution

A genius who is both a prophet and poet is still wanting in fulness of development if he does not possess a philosopher's practical wisdom and systematised knowledge. The prophets and poets are both apt to be unpractical, intolerant of details and inattentive to the affairs of everyday world. An Avatar who is born for the good of all humanity and for all time should have the best qualities of all the three combined. He should have the heart to obey as well as to command; the eye to observe as well as to adore; the ear to listen as well as to sing; and the tongue to study as well as to teach. Pride

of possession of any kind, the heaviness that overtakes all mortal beings ere they are able to lift themselves a little above the ordinary level, should not encumber him who is born to be the world-benefactor. He should be the angel of goodness whose immense wings of overspreading sympathy are not wanting in speed or agility as they sail down from the highest sky to the rescue of the humblest supplicant. His energy of heart and brain should always be exercised through the many channels of his limbs and senses in the service of others and he should never be betrayed into the least indifference concerning the affairs of the living men and women. Practice and precept, wisdom to know what is what and strength to achieve what he thinks to be the best for the world, command of himself as well as of others, respect for mankind in the multiple proportion of what is paid to his single person by those around him, reverence for the laws of earth and heaven and righteous loyalty to the dictates of conscience, love of this world and this living humanity, the desire to plant the holy light and fire he has brought with him in the innumerable hearths of the living hearts and souls—this desire for the service of others and readiness to sacrifice anything in the interest of the universal good should be the characteristic business qualifications of the God's Agent who is deputed to the earth to execute the Divine Will. Often in

many cases a consciousness of no other Heaven but the evergreen earth, an awareness of no other God but the divinity of love, a loyalty to no other law but righteousness, the supreme faith in the fact of *this* life strengthened by the sense of reality that grows with every human experience has sufficed to sustain the *Inspiration of Humanity* and *Instinct to set things right* which is the one indisputable mark and ineffaceable sign of a true Avatar.

True Avatars very few; Sri Krishna suffices for India

The truly great Avatars are indeed very few, not enough to count on one's fingers; but they are the highest products of human civilisation. They are the great founders of the world faiths and living religions whose names and persons are held so supremely sacred by the millions of their respective followers as only next to God, if not on an equality with Divinity. India claims many Avatars as her exclusive and enviable heritage but it is the highest Avatar born in India—if indeed highest is possible among the highest—who has emphatically declared himself to be in divine and eternal kinship with all the other Avatars of the world, Indian or Foreign. It is a dangerous task to choose among the living Gods who are all of them our born brothers and children of the same humanity.

Comparisons are always odious and the worst of comparisons is that set by the presumptuous, prejudiced fanatics to regulate the relative value of the very best. To us, Indians, Sri Krishna suffices; he can stand on his feet on eternal ground along with the others who are his brothers and there is no reason to think why this ever-youthful member of the Illustrious Family should have a less claim to perpetual life and influence. Sri Krishna is indeed a well known instance in humanity's experience of a genius of the highest order enabled by the most ennobling influences to exercise its powers to the loftiest human ends and he is the only founder of a religion who lived all his life-time amidst the dust and din of the toiling world and wrought day and night for the good of all men, women and children, loving them all alike and loved by them tenfold in return.

Sri Krishna is the National God and Guide of the Awakened India

To those other than Hindus the above may seem to be a preposterous claim for one whose historical existence is a matter of conjecture, whose reported morals are highly questionable, if not criminal, and whose theoretic ideals are very much corrupted and perverted in practice by his boastful followers. Let men of such persuasions hold their breath in peace and devote themselves to the study of their own God's

and Prophets and let them not be so much wanting in their self-confidence as to be disturbed by the convictions and admirations of others whose hearts orientate naturally towards the sun of their own climes. Sri Krishna is the National God and Guide of the Awakened India. To the regenerate India there is no better guide and teacher than the Divine Charioteer of Arjuna and to the United India of all nations, races and religions, the one object of universal adoration would be the Avatar of Love and Righteousness whose teachings stand unsurpassed in their loftiness of feeling for all humanity and in their profound grasp of the natural laws and forces that regulate the life and activity of all worlds and men and things.

II. THE AGE OF SRI KRISHNA

When are Avatars Born: What Good They Do to the World

Avatars like Sri Krishna are born only once in many centuries and even millenniums. They are the children of eternity and their births mark the highest epochs of human advancement both in ideals and actual achievements. Empires and kingdoms tremble at the tread of their footsteps and the heart of humanity feels a new afflatus and onward impelling impulse. Hoary systems and age-worn institutions are swept like cobwebs unknown and unfelt at the touch of their hands. The skies are ablaze with new lights and splendours and the heavens of ordinary hopes and ambitions are drowned by the floodlight of one spontaneous faith. Earth grows more akin to God's throne of Love and evergrowing beauty informs our environments when such divine teachers and saints, prophets and saviours, walk in our midst and wake our living visions to the heights of glory undreamt of before. The path of life's progress seems to be one straight road of love and duty, the world hangs about us for our own good and unlimited display of liberty, heaven is ours by our choice and

adoption and God comes to dwell in our heart and conscience when we are converted to the truth of ourselves, when we come to know what we are capable of, by the light and example of such born brothers of ours who hold our heart's dearest affections and convince us beyond our own persuasions.

The Climacteric Hour of Sri Krishna's Birth

Krishna was born in the most critical age of Ancient Indian history. He was born in the climacteric hour of the Heroic Age when the civilisation and culture, the social organisation and evolution, of the old Aryans had reached a critical stage of advancement and uncertainty, of abundance and perplexity ; it was the stage when the hoarded wealth and learning of centuries had, instead of being equally distributed and organically assimilated, produced a dead weight of possession and heavy adornment that threatened to break and disrupt the living body, whose important limbs were starved of their legitimate food and the vital functions were not discharged by those others which were overfed.

A Digression : Certain Virtues and Vices Characteristic of the Indo-Aryans

Here we have to make a digression and take a rapid survey of the spiritual and social

progress of the Aryans from the time of the earliest Vedas. Certain tendencies, sensibilities and insensibilities, certain insights and blindnesses, have always marked the Aryan mind and character ever since it began to express itself in hymns and prayers and expand in power and volume of thought and deed. A passionate love of joyous existence here on earth or hereafter, a falling into ecstatic rapport with the majestic aspects of Nature, a letting loose of the mental forces to express themselves in the loftiest feelings, thoughts and images, and a preternatural insistence to acquaint themselves with the ultimate source and end of all things, are some of the prevailing positive qualities that even the most prejudiced and superficial observer is forced to admit as distinctively Aryan. Equally prominent are some of their defects which in a race so richly gifted, imaginative and spiritual, are perplexingly incompatible. The ever vigilant seekers of the Unseen, the One and the Supreme, the doughty champions of the spiritual side in man, the undaunted warriors of immortality, the highly susceptible souls so keenly sensitive to all the indefinable suggestions of Nature's manifold and variegated sounds, sights and movements, they who first proclaimed in emphatic and unequivocal language the unity of all life and nature, the Seers who were first to propound the divine truth of God's all pervading presence, how far short of perfection they look when they acquiesce in the race-pride of man and

how futile seems all sacred knowledge and inspired revelation when the knowers of the Supreme refuse to believe in man's brotherhood and family kinship. Race-pride, race-pride, the pride of strength and achievement, the pride of power and possession, consciousness of their own excellence and incomparable worth, haughty disdain of others and indifference to the feelings and sentiments of those whom they live with and look down upon, are some of the grave defects of temperament and character which have disgraced the Aryan life and conduct throughout the growing centuries.

The Evils of Race and Caste Pride: (1) Arrested Social Development

One evil begets another and that in turn many others till like the leaky ship in the deep waters all the powers of existing good are cheated of their progress and propelling force and are forced to be fully engaged in merely mitigating and obviating the evil effects of the hole underneath. Centuries of settlement along the fertile banks of the great rivers had given rise to the growth and development of powerful kingdoms and dynasties. Immense wealth and learning, the bounties of both mind and body, were at the disposal of the Aryan settlers without any exception. But they ignored the conquered and had the same

contempt of colour and race as they ever had before. The same indifference to the vast humanity outside the select circle of the sacred castes characterised the governing classes. Though there were wise men and sages who preached aloud the essential equality of all men, the practice of exclusion and the sentiment of race-prejudice was still being cultivated. This moral insensibility to the external world reacted upon the minds and habits of those who lived within the limited circle. The caste organisation which was at first but tentative began to harden and gradually transformed itself into one of hereditary qualification and right of birth. Among the higher castes there was always keen competition for the foremost place of prestige. The sacerdotal class of teachers and priests vied with the powerful class of kings and warriors for the supremest place in society and the whole of the purely Aryan world was divided into two hostile camps both of whom were equally insistent and dogmatic about their special claims to superiority.

The consequence was the kings were unable to exercise their sovereign sway to any good effect as the work of detailed administration was in the hands of their enemies, the learned Brahmins. So too the Brahmin teachers were unable to put into practice any ideal scheme of reorganisation as their own class—interests and enmity of the Kshatriyas dictated the policy of let-alone and let-us-strive-for-our-own-good.

The Kshatriyas were the kings and commanders, the Brahmins were the administrators and legislators. Between them they held all the highest offices of the state and church and both of them never consulted together for the common good of the masses they governed. Most of their time was spent in arrogant assertions of their respective claims to superiority and both of them had recourse to exegesis and interpretation of old texts in support of their professed privileges. Both had scholars and philosophers in their camps and both were equally contriving and subtle. While the Kshatriyas indulged in their aristocratic luxuries, the Brahmins languished in priestly idleness and both lost their vivifying touch with the living world and with it their extraordinary mental acumen and grasp of things. The Kshatriyas easily degenerated themselves into a set of unscrupulous debauchees and the Brahmins into a pack of unprincipled adventurers. The land was ruled by these enemies of progress and though there was still plenty of wealth and learning there was no real justice and no true wisdom practised amongst the people. The Brahmins blamed the Kshatriyas and the Kshatriyas blamed the Brahmins. Each sought not the good of the whole nor was even willing that the other side should gain decided supremacy by such enforced feats of general goodwill. The nation was held in subjection, the labourers were being despoiled of their legitimate share in the produce of

the land, the ignorant masses were left unreformed and as illiterate as before, the poor serfs and slaves were still living the life of degraded and despised outcastes, and the majority of the people were unhappy.

The Evils of Race and Caste Pride: (2) Unhealthy Spiritual Ideals

The spiritual history of India begins with the worship of the Sun. From the time of the earliest Vedas composed during the dawn of human civilisation bards have burst into spontaneous song at the sight of the Rising Sun, the burning orb of beauty, splendour and glory, the giver of life and light, the bestower and restorer of health and energy, the benefactor of unlimited gifts, the source of all our earthly joys and appurtenances and the supreme light of heaven who inspires us every day with the undying hopes of immortality. The Sun, the Sun, the supreme, the celestial Sun, had ever been an object of worship to the Indo-Aryans. They adored him as the Lord of Life with the golden heart of outbursting energy, as the Supreme Intelligence who reads into the heart of every man with his infinite penetrating rays, and as the Radiant Face of Divine Beauty whose looks bring forth from the bosom of the earth the variegated blossoms of every hue and scent. Later on with growing experience and wisdom they began to look for the Moral and

Spiritual Sun of Eternal Truth and Everlasting Good, the centre and pivot of all our varying faiths and habits' orbits, the Revealer of Reality and the Regnant God of Reason, the Unsetting and Ever-shining Presence, who evokes our holiest joy and reverence and becomes one with us in our Soul-Beatitude. The rigour of speculation and rigid introspection revealed to them the light seen not by the outer eye and the pursuit of abstract truth and Attributeless Absolute became the ruling passion of the scholars and metaphysicians. The objective sun of everyday experience ceased to be the centre of their soul illumination and with arrested breath and close shut eyes they sought to catch a glimpse of the Eternal beyond all setting suns, fading worlds and fleeting phenomena.

Few things are as good as a disciplinary course of asceticism; but nothing is so vicious and far from truth as a doctrine of asceticism. With the growing emphasis of extravagant asceticism came as a reaction the irresistible craving for extravagant sensuousness; and the more the one increased the more the other sought to increase itself and pride in its existence.

The Good and Evil Side of Asceticism

Asceticism is the doctrine of abstract aspiration and affectation of unearthliness—which is the peculiar product of caste exclusions or monastic seclusions. It has a soul side and also a sensuous evil side. It keeps alive

the noble fire of aspiration and inculcates the need for holiness in all our earthly pursuits which should be held in undoubted allegiance and effective subservience to our eternal ends. The ascetics are never tired of life though they profess it ever so long and so loudly. Asceticism conserves the fire of enjoyment in order to collect more of it and convert it into the holy fire of divine sacrifice where the flesh is burned before the altar of the Spirit. But it does not *create*; though it feeds on stimulii, it does not give rise to noble actions and the growing heights of godly attitude are unscaled by its idle limbs and atrophied heart. The ascetic spirit, as we have seen, feeds on the flesh of life; and when it cannot overcome the living flesh and uproot all irresistible impulses, it begins to seek the vulnerable spots and prick the bleeding wounds of the growing nerve and muscle. It cures not the ills and sores of life but allows them to grow that it might *then* despise the flesh with more apparent reason. Asceticism is a lust, the lust of affectation which feeds on the decaying flesh, on life's excrements and seamy side of things; and it leaves a loathing in the mouth though it promises our ears very sweet and heavenly things in the end.

THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN ASCETICISM AND SENSUALISM AND BETWEEN SACERDOTALISM AND MILITARISM

The spiritual cleavage ran parallel to the social and the difference of ideals coincided with the difference

of practical interests. The Brahmins became the greatest advocates and expounders of the ascetic cult while the Kshatriyas stood by their lands and jewels, their wars and battles. The Ascetic School led the van of intellectual progress and was characterised by its extraordinary rigidity of rules and bone-breaking discipline. The Kshatriyas had nothing to offer as a challenge to the Brahminic Ideal of Sense-Control and Mind-Power. The Kings were too worldly and were the slaves of animal cravings. The warrior class had outgrown its legitimate use and still continued to arrogate to itself more and more of the peaceful products of labour. The days of Janaka and Rama were gone. Though the ideal of good government had been in vogue for centuries and though an ideal King like Rama had been accorded divine honours the Kshatriyas of the later heroic age were disinclined for any serious pursuit but reckless war and riotous revelries. The Gods were truly on the side of the priests who outwardly at least professed an ideal which restricted the unscrupulous appropriation of others' wealth for the purposes of shameless dissipation. The Brahmins openly begged and received alms with all humility and contentment; and among these beggars were many profound scholars and subtle metaphysicians. The Brahmin is always the slave of some ideal and once it has converted him he will never disown his allegiance to it thereafter. His performances may give the lie to his

professions yet he would cling to his cherished ideal as long as he has a breath to breathe and tongue to talk. The learned men with their loud followers, the wise sages with their willing disciples, the proud metaphysicians with their humble admirers, were one and all conscious of the noble cause they upheld and covertly or overtly all of them were arrayed in a body for the speedy destruction of the Military Demons who were guilty of all deadly sins: and when they found themselves unable to execute the doom with their own feeble hands they prayed with fervour and prophesied with certainty the wholesale destruction of the evil hosts by the Avenging Hand of God!

Ill-treatment of Women, the most Repugnant Feature of the Age

The most repugnant feature of the age was the prejudice of the high caste-men against all women against their own mothers, sisters, wives and daughters. This was the inevitable result of the pride of caste and personal superiority. Pride of flesh arrests the growth of the mind and pride of mind perverts the reason and conscience; pride of possession aggravates poverty and pride of intellect increases ignorance. Pride of caste brings forth more castes and pride of one kind begets pride of many other kinds. The Brahmins and Kshatriyas

were both of them aristocrats of the most exclusive type, where even among those of the same caste or clan there were differences of family pedigree, prestige and sanctity. The ascetics and the sensualists had only one thing in common—their common contempt for women and the lower castes. The weaker sex were oftentimes objects of pity to some strong men who erred to the human side unconsciously; but most often they were looked upon as objects of temptations and never did the women of the age receive from the hands of the abominable priests and abnoxious princes fair treatment, not to speak of honour and equal respect. The sensualists had no reason to think highly of the humble and too easily accessible gratifiers of their lust whom they looked upon as aids to sleep and martial excitement, as those having no other use in the world or any other intent in themselves than to serve and pander to their sexual tastes and passions. The ascetics looked upon women with the eye of affected abhorrence and hypocritical disdain. Even the sight and thought of women was proscribed to the aspirant of any age or inclination. Women's smiles were the sure proofs of their shallowness, their tears were proofs of their innate guilt, their obedience of their inborn inferiority and slavishness; their pleasing ways were practices of deception, their loving looks were luring temptations and their gentle touch the triumph of sin; mother's womb was to them the hell-pit and the wife's breast the poison of seduction

and certain death. The corruption of the courts all over the land unbalanced the mind of the priests who have always a mania for scenting out sexual evils. The debased morals of the military class were attributed by them to the evil influence of the women who filled the royal courts and entourage. Philosophers began seriously to argue whether women had a soul and spiritual part and whether anything good could come out of "the deceitful sex". So much of gratitude and godly sense of reverence had the degenerates of those days towards the saintly wives and mothers who had already given to the world such eternal types of feminine-divineness as Savitri, Sita and Damayanti.

The Age of Unrighteousness which the Avatar was Born to set Right

In this age of heartless asceticism and bestial sensuality, of arrogant dogmatism and unblushing immorality, the age of aristocratic rancour and sacerdotal spite, of mutual strife and malignant jealousy, of cunning priests and corrupt princes, of selfish rulers and faithless ministers, in the age of universal ill-feeling, habitual intriguing, hereditary hatreds and irrepressible evils, in the age of unrighteousness and in the hour when the devil and darkness seemed to supersede the power of good and light, was born the Child of God and Nature,

the Apostle of Eternal Truth and Righteousness and the Bringer of Light, Love and Joy !

The Work before the Lord

The Lord, though He was born a man, lived for the cause of woman. Though He was born an Aryan He loved all mankind equally alike. He was richest in love and affection when He was poor in wealth and He was most liberal of all gifts when He became rich. He proved Himself stronger than the strong and wiser than the wisest; yet He was humbler than the humblest and made Himself the most faithful servant of those who stood in need of His help. The Divine Charioteer of Partha had to wade through a sea of troubles, through quagmires, swamps and mephitic pools of human ills and evils ere He was able to set His face against ageing vices, outworn institutions, tyrannical autocrats and time-serving priests. The Wielder of Discus had to use His weapon of destruction for years and years in the removal of obstacles to human progress ere He was able to call upon Arjuna to do away with the *dear-diseases, the blood-related putrefactions, the revered lies and regnant evils* that were then ravaging the whole land. The Avatar of the Supreme was born at the critical hour when the earth was weary with the weight, and the heavens were horror-stricken with the sight, of the many iniquities of mankind;

and He had to live long years of patient toil and industry, of deep thought and study, had to wage many fierce wars and battles, had to conduct many a campaign of colonisation and peaceful settlement, had to fight against men for the sake of women, had to fight with men against other men and had to fight with His own relations, kith and kin of dearest blood, and sacrifice everything He had of wealth, health and fame for the cause of Righteousness.

III. THE BIRTH OF SRI KRISHNA AND OF THE UNNAMABLE BEAUTY OF SELF-DENYING LOVE

I

KRISHNA, the evergreen joy of the earth, the gladsomeness of all men and Gods, was conceived in tears. The son of Devaki was the cause of her woe. The Lord was born in tears while his mother was bound in chains, tears washed his new born face, tears kissed his baby cheeks, tears fed his tiny lips and bitter tears bathed him warm when he was born on earth. The skies were raining torrents of tears, sad night with loose hung locks of darkest hue was groaning in thunders and wailing to the winds the agony of a world in travail!

II

Kamsa of Guilty Conscience, Kamsa the Tyrant, was Krishna's uncle and mother's cousin-brother. Kamsa was the King of Mathura by an usurper's right. Ugrasena, the wise father, was ousted from the throne before his time by the ambitious Crown Prince, Kamsa. Kamsa knew his strength and

Ugrasena also knew the strength of insubordination and inordinate ambition, of brute force and bloody conspiracy, of foul intrigue and parricidal treachery. Ugrasena wished to live long in peace and retired from public life ; and Kamsa sought the very heyday of his youth to reign in plenary power and arbitrary authority and Kamsa was the Sovereign Lord of Mathura.

III

Behold the sword of power in the Tyrant's hand, he points its blade against his sister's breast! He drags poor Devaki by the hair from her hallowed seat in the bridal car beside her chosen lord and wedded husband, the gentle Vasudeva. She trembles like a fawn and clings in still unbroken trust to her dearest brother's hand—yet again he lifts the sword to plunge it deep into her bridal breast too full of joy to take in the thrust of sudden death. He would plant within her womb his sword of truculence and tyrant will, and perforce would kill her ere she gave birth to the Dread of the Tyrants, the Dispeller of Darkness, the Wielder of Discus and Kamsadom's certain and undoubted Death. He fears the Unborn Babe of his sister's womb and fain would kill her for her coming child's supposed guilt. He dreads the thought of death or deposition ; he would not, would not at all be deposed as *he* had done his father. To die, to be killed by one of his next kin,

to die while he had years to live and enjoy, to die and desert the throne and power which he had dearly sought even at the cost of his father's life—oh to die was to be driven to Hell earlier than is the wont of wicked men, to rule early and die late was his one way of evading the impending Hell.

IV

Hell and Death haunted him day and night. The blood of dearest father and dearest sister he had as lief shed, had it not been for second thoughts and timely retirements. He saw his future painted in red, he drank red wine and ate raw flesh of animals butchered before his sight; he held at his court the deadly games of swords-play and elephant-baiting and beheld with exulting pride the hot jet of purple blood gushing from broken limbs or battered brains; he drank and drank both day and night, his eyes were ever shot with blood, his thoughts were gory, his fancies bloody—he killed poor Devaki's sons one by one, he killed them all, all the six of them—he drank their blood, he squeezed their flesh ere they were born and lain on earth!

V

Was there none to resist him? Was there none to chide him? Did none prevent him or persuade him to desist from such evil deeds? Where were then your heroes gone, your true Kshatriyas and noble

captains? Where were they hiding, bousing, gambling or sex-hunting? On whose vicious breasts were pillowed their wicked heads and which brand of wine were they drinking, which poisonous liquid or pernicious opiate?

Where were then your priests of renowned sanctity and reverence—provoking mien? Was it ordained of the Vedas to flatter such a King? Was it holiness to offer worship for the victory of such a tyrant? Was it godly to trade on the fears of a fool and was it righteous to predict his death at an unborn babe's hand? Does Death need prediction and is he the willing servant of God or Devil who receives gold for such guilty prophesies? Are astrologers wiser than the Eternal God and doth Future await the will of crafty soothsayers that they might earn fame and gold at mortals' hands?

Were all the wicked priests weighed in gold and tombed within a hill of gold, could they bring back the life of an infant, could they atone one drop of innocent blood? Who was it that predicted Kamsa's death and persuaded him not to pursue holy ways to stay the inevitable hand? Who was it that was wise enough to predict a future event but was not honest enough to protest against a prevailing evil? The gold-seekers they, stomach-fillers, luxury hunters, panders were those priests who provoked a Tyrant to terrible deeds, who wasted not a single breath when little babes were done to death and absolved the

Baby-Butcher from the sin of blood for rewards of sumptuous feasts and liberal gold!

The hell-born hypocrites, their consolation and casuistical reasoning was—the babes were born to die, such was their fate!

And the priests are born to eat and utter lies by hundreds—*such is their practice!*

VI

Poor and helpless Devaki, the saddest princess and the cruellest bereaved mother on earth! Would that she had never been born, being born never been married and being married never been a mother—such a mother of so many beautiful children all, all, to be killed and butchered in cold blood by her own brother and next of kin. Was it a God's world she lived in and was there any just person, any merciful heart, who could assure her the freedom to live with her own child if any such were to be born in future—"Oh let the child alone live after me even though I die. Would that I had been killed the very marriage day and not spared to see myself cut limb by limb, to see my vitals torn from my womb and this shell and husk of a body alone remaining! Oh Angels born to die because of my sinful blood, oh, ye darlings of divinest beauty who left the world unvoiced, unheard, whose life's flame was extinguished ere your eyes opened and ere your hearts respired and

felt the warm breath of this living world! Are my children alone born to die the instant they are born? Is there no sunlight and joy, no vivifying air, warmth and food for *my* little offsprings? Are they alone too many and superfluous and do one and all of them deserve such death?"

"O Goddess Earth, Thou many-wombed mother who gives birth to the million million lives that move and mingle and dwell with joy on your broad breast, have you no tears to weep with such a mother as myself who has lost everything born of her humble mortal womb? Could I but give birth to another, would you conceal him, Mother, in your deep hidden wombs or unseen chambers, in your inaccessible grottos or impenetrable abysses? Let him be but alive anywhere, let me know that I have a son living or even a daughter, let me not suffer again the sin of seeing my own children being killed—do you hear, Mother Earth, and do you promise to keep him in secret, safe and healthy till he comes of age and is able to protect me and himself?"

Such a prayer went forth in the spontaneous fervour of sorrow from the mauled and mangled heart of the desolate princess-mother.

VII

Had the earth any ears to hear? Were all the earth-born children indifferent alike to her? Did none

condole with her and none console her with secret promises of help and sacred pledges of friendship? Did she wail to the winds and weep to the vast space in vain? Was there no kin or neighbour, no human heart able to help her in that time of need, sympathetic enough to staunch her bleeding heart and bold enough to stand by her side against the infuriate arms of death?

VIII

Behold the sun on the lea setting by the side of Jumna's waters. Why did he look so fair and why was his face so suddenly flushed with such a preternatural glory? Was it he was privileged to see from his vantage point in the heavens a vision of beauty, joy and splendour, surpassing his own light and the light of million stars amongst whom he walked in regal pomp; was it that the doors of heaven were flung wide open and the Sun-God with his uncounted eyes beheld the flood-gates of eternity pouring their streams of molten gold and melting stars into the crucible of a living heart; was it that he saw the heavens of infinite expanses shrink themselves into the size of a small human babe whose every living cell was a starry system and universe in itself; and was it that he beheld the moving waters of boundless existence agitate with a new activity of unprecedented intensity and beheld the heart and

blood of all living worlds and things throb and boil with new bursting hopes and joys? Indeed he saw the Golden Babe was being born in Gokula in that very hour and moment, his heart leapt for joy and poured its burning splendours all over the green and godly plain. A moment later he saw the Golden Babe of All Beauty burn Her Female Form in the fire of Holiest Sacrifice, burn Herself and melt in the most sacred fire of self-denying love and transform Her living soul into the Dark Green Figure of a Baby Boy!

The Sun-God started at the sight of this heavenly transfiguration, gazed round in wonder and was still more bewildered by the changing sights of the earth. The earth he had known for ages was no longer the humble planet dependent on his favour and good-will. She was filled with a godliness brighter than any he had ever before been privileged to behold, still less to possess. All over Gokula's fields the cows and calves were bathed in a flood of joy, their bodies seemed to be buoyed up in the high ethereal air and they frisked and gambolled with a lightness they had not known before. The wild grass that grew in plenty shot forth from their hidden bosoms tall stalks of flowers, golden and white and purple, that blew proudly to the winds and stood on their own soil challenging every inclement weather. The earth looked the fairest he had ever seen before and he heard sweet music echoing from afar and felt

a thrilling shiver rouse the Jumna's gentle waters to sudden waves of surging joy. He leapt himself to the river's throbbing bosom and he would fain stand there for ever kissing the crest of the rapturous heaving waves—stay there he would and mix for ever his melting splendours with that of the river if only he could share their rising tide of joy!

The Sun-God went down with a heavy heart too reluctant to leave the earth of such godliest joys—then a sudden transformation and thick clouds spread across the sky!

IX

It was midnight and the skies had been pouring in torrents ever since it became dark as if intent to wash away the accumulated sin and dirt of years; the streets of Mathura were in the grip of an impenetrable gloom save for the momentary flashes of heaven's torchlight; thunders shot out of the void of silence with many repeated roars and murmurs of mystic significance; the world was being drowned by the bursting tears of Heaven's mercy when the symptoms of child-birth were felt by Devaki. She slowly roused her husband from his overpowering sleep and bade him pray to Heaven with whole heart and soul.

A thrill ran through the torpid Vasudeva's frame and he felt new impulses running through his placid veins and arteries. Every moment of her pain and

agony aroused in his mind the greater agony that was still in store for them, every pang of his dear wife's travail pierced his heart with the poignancy of all its fruitlessness, of the impending murder and death, of the inevitable bloodshed and infanticide, of his own impotency and helplessness, of his sinful acquiescence in the act of evil-doing and his past flagitious willingness to let the many children die one by one at Kamsa's hands !

Vasudeva looked around with searching eyes and found the guardsmen of Kamsa asleep. Indeed they were dead asleep as they had been set to watch too early and as they had drunk themselves to death that day to keep their bodies warm through the rain and cold. He looked through the window into the outside world and every flash of lightning lashed him to sterner purpose. The thunders seemed to be the groans of the high heavens angry at his neglect of his divine duty. An unusual flash of blinding brilliance shot through the whole space and through and through his heart; and from his throat went forth an involuntary groan rivalling the sound of thunder. For, behold, the Child—the Child was there !

The fateful child had been born a few moments before he heard its piercing cry. The mother was lying unconsciously, her hand still manacled and held above her head; and beside her lay the puny babe, the source of all their joy and woe. Oh but to spare him alive, oh but to run away with him to the darkest

corners of the dark world—alas! could he but use his hands that too were manacled with thick bands of metal! At once he felt himself stronger than ever before and *with one pull he broke the iron fetters of the past.* He felt himself then as free as air and as having not the least bodily weight or weakness. Quickly he wrapped the babe in a long robe of silk and ran with him out into the open streets, both his hands holding fast his little burden to his breast.

X

Through pouring rain and spattering waters, through blowing winds and biting gusts, through the dark, dark world wading through the rushing torrents both deep and broad, stumbling, fumbling, running, falling, bending and swinging from side to side, out of the streets of Mathura, past its suburbs and surrounding plains, he ran up to the banks of the holy Jumna and there he heard the splash and roar of the waters running from the fields and roadside into the river's stream. The rain had then grown less violent, a light shone on the sky and lo! the moon was rising slowly and shot its rays through the crevices between the clouds. Vasudeva beheld the wet grass and the dark bluish stream of the Jumna with a thrill of joy and behold, there grew a new courage in his heart. He shrunk not from the task before him, he took not a step behind. He was wet

all over with rain and he stopped now and then to feel the little thing inside the silk whether it breathed. Yes, it did then as ever; and holding the dear bundle close to his breast, his face looking up to heaven and his throbbing heart exposed to the mercy of the sky, he laid himself flat on the broad bosom of the Jumna as if it were a mat, then gave motion to his legs and swam and paddled with his right hand while the left clung to the godly burden.

XI

His body was the boat, his breast was the cabin, his left hand's palm the only roof and his right hand was the only oar that took him across the deep waters. Was it for an hour or eternity he struggled thuswise, was it possible of him to swim across the wide stream, did he ply himself straight through the river's width or move alongside up or down—he gave himself no such thoughts but paddled, paddled, with his right arm, gurgling, swirling and splashing the limpid waters more and more till his head stuck against the soft muddy bank and till he felt the earth easily beneath his feet. Then he stood on the ground and held the dear enfolded babe close to his face and kissed the apparel that hid it from the rain and cold. He was indeed on the other side of the Jumna and had swum in sooth straight to his intended place. Without wasting another moment he walked on in the direction

of Gokula till he reached Nanda's house at that weird time of night.

Vasudeva went straight to Nanda's wife's confinement-room where she lay asleep beside the girl-babe she had given birth to, the very same night. It was a matter of a moment to replace the boy in the legitimate baby's place; and Nanda's own flesh and blood, the prettiest girl-babe on earth, was wrapped in another silk and taken in to Vasudeva's hands and to its own fate at the point of Kamsa's sword.

It was a few hours ere Vasudeva returned to his wife's chamber with his human "exchange". Just then the new babe began to squeal and startled the whole house! The guards were roused from their prolonged sleep and the officer in charge swore and cursed, kicked and almost killed the still snoring orderlies. Ah, there was a child come to the world to kill their king and they had not yet time to give him warning—why, that meant their instantaneous death as well as the death of their king. Quick the news was taken to Kamsa who was sleeping that night with a drawn sword beside his bed. Ere he had heard the first word he walked in his bare night-dress, the mighty king of all Mathura, with sword in hand to kill a puny babe of a few moments' age on earth.

XII

Kamsa the Cruel, Kamsa the Conscienceless, Kamsa the Baby-Butcher, was out again for another

bout of human blood and insisted again upon his drinking his sister's life-blood and hers alone. Like the demon of the dark-night, like the dread phantom of a most horrid dream, like the image of death and emissary of the devil, the eternal enemy of the Gods and the inveterate foe of righteousness dashed into his sister's chamber and demanded the body of the child that was his *born* enemy and needed despatching back expeditiously to the place from where it came. At Kamsa's sight Devaki started from her bed and implored him to have mercy on a frail little babe that was but a girl who would never grow up to wear arms in future nor would have the strength to kill his royal person. With that she clasped the little babe to her breast as best she could with her manacled arms and struggled with her fiendish brother for a few moments with a courage born of desperation. Kamsa roared and howled and his mouth foamed in uncontrollable rage. He tore the infant from her arms, he dashed it upon the floor with both his hands and fain would trample it with his triumphant feet—when lo! the babe was nowhere to be seen! He looked around, up and down the roof and floor, sought at every corner, displaced the bed and pillows, tore open their sheaths to discover the hidden enemy of his life—yet still to no purpose. He struck his head against the wall, stamped his feet in impotent rage and ran screaming outside the rooms into the open streets to observe whether the

mysterious magic babe was flying in the air. Indeed *he* saw it flying with his own eyes—it flew like a stray meteor across the sky shooting zigzag with a vivid flashing light. The star of his fate flew out of his hands and his sword was held high in the air threatening the eternal sky lest it should shelter his inveterate foe; the earth he challenged, and Heaven alike, to measure their powers with his tyrant hands.

Thereafter his life was one fatuous dream of evil fate, thereafter he smelt poison in the breathing air, grew crazily superstitious and morbidly suspicious, his very boast and strength of body was gone and he lived a demented life of deadly doubts and intrigues, in unceasing fear of death, in horrid dreams of blood, incensed to more devilish deeds as death and hell seemed to him for certain as his sealed and unalterable fate!

IV. SRI KRISHNA'S CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH

The Marvellous Stories are Fraught with Profound Suggestions and Poetic Truths

The accounts of Sri Krishna's childhood and youth are at once bewilderingly beautiful and perplexingly profound. Language fails its assigned task of outward expression and conveyance of emotion when to the poet's eye leaps forth the image of the eternal babe swimming on the smooth clean floor of the cowherd's tidy house at Gokula, when the same eye is made to behold the same babe in various transfiguring shapes of radiance and beauty, of vastness and bulk, when even the eye of imagination is unable to pursue the babe's mysterious movements and disappearances: the wildest metaphors and figures of speech stand abashed of their own insignificance and inappropriateness when they are charged with the duty of delivering the divine feelings of love, joy and wonder, that invade our heart on all sides and leave us breathless with the fulness of life and breath. In the presence of the divine child we forget our learned

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language and begin to lisp in love-sounds and interjections; our accumulated pride and knowledge of years' hoarding is thrown to the winds, we strip ourselves of our overlaid clothes and formalities of out-door usage, we run back through the doors of our native feelings and natural impulses into the sanctuary of our heart and shut ourselves up with the throbbing, breathing, laughing, crying thing which is our own heart's throb and kiss of kiss. The child is the mirror and measure of a man's joy; the child's face is the mirror which holds up the image of a man's soul in living size and shape; the child's face is the transparent surface through which the man sees himself transformed into the shape of joy and beauty which he would like to be again in life, he sees through it the magic birth of many hopes and aspirations, new visions of worlds unbeheld before and new heavens undreamt of by day or night. The child is man's contribution to eternity, the very best piece of his heart and handiwork. The human race is laid under obligation by the man who brings out of his body the best image of himself with a longer lease of life than his own.

The Divinity of Motherhood: Yasoda's Double Claim to It

The Mother! The one proof of the affinity of all living cells and growing fibres of affection, of the unity of

all running veins and circulating blood, the reality of heart's life-generative power, the divine and undoubted proof of love's readiness to part with its body, flesh and blood, to bring forth and sustain another life, the eternal proof of love's liberty that could conceive with the force of boundless, divinest love and bring forth from its womb of all concentred activity the Godliest God of all loves and beauties by right of one unceasing, evergrowing, evolving desire, the oracle of Nature's secrets and the high priestess of undying truth is the *Mother*! This material universe is the visible body of Mother Nature who carries in her heart through the endless ages the most sacred passion to bring forth from her hidden womb of golden fires and eternal splendours the Living Light and Sight of Sight to whose making goes forth the experience of every flowing age and epoch, the continental convulsions and planetary births, the constructive collisions of starry systems and the universe-deluging floods of galactic seas. Yasoda's motherhood was doubly divine and human. Hers was the womb that gave birth to the Babe of Beauty and Self-Denying Love, hers was the flesh and blood that was poured into the consuming fire of Kamsa's anger and hers was the milk of human love that poured freely to feed the very same living heart which stole into the place of her legitimate child. Krishna was Yasoda's child by all ties of human and eternal loves; he was the child of divinest love whose

life deserved the toil and sacrifice of ages. Yasoda knew him not as anything more than her own and womb-born child ;—Oh for his preservation she had lost more of her life's share than any mother is forced to sacrifice. The child of Gokula was the delight of all men and Gods, of all boys and girls, of all maidens, married men and women, and of all grey haired dames and grandsires. Nanda was blessed in his secret sacrifice. The child that seemed to be a golden babe of all beauty figured in the form of a girl, how strange Yasoda found it a boy by broad daylight. A *dark*-blue boy ! Yet none dearer than he. Better all the gold of the earth's interiors were thrown into the air to give birth to some more of such sweet grass and sprouting evergreen. Yasoda the unconscious sacrificer ! Yasoda the all-loving Mother ! Yasoda's privilege was to possess the child of eternal and evergrowing love and never did any deserve that happiness more than she.

The Godliness of Motherly Love and Joy

The magic child of wonderful metamorphoses, the child of many shapes and figures, of many beauties and mischievous tricks, his smiles were the sweetest nectar of heaven to taste which aspired the heart and soul of every human and animal being. To milk and nurse him was every mother's pride and the very cows drew near his side, the little calves capered to their little brother's side, by the strength

of pure elemental love. The proudest breast of Yasoda to have nourished the noblest soul of humanity, proudest was Nanda who sat blissfully beside his pouse while she delivered the little burden into his hands to look after some housewife's duty. It was an extraordinary child of indescribable beauty of expression. The stars on the clear frosty nights shone not more beautiful than his large round eyes and not once was Yasoda able to paint them with pure collyrium unmixed with her joyous tears. She spent her days kissing him for hours, dressing him in varied ways and feeding him with her best prepared delicacies. He was always a visitor to her world of wonder, always a guest to her heart of affection and an object of evergrowing adoration—he was her very gladsomeness and godliness of soul. His growth day by day, his growing limbs and growing girth, his laughs and sounds of growing intensity, his unceasing prattle of growing distinctness, his growth of divinest charms, godlier grew the Gods of Heaven as they witnessed the godliest joy of Yasoda who was privileged to give of her life's best milk and tears towards such growth of universal love.

The Divine Revelation of Yasoda

The dearest, best of mothers, the proudest of those who had borne forth children, the fondest of parents having the most fanciful views of their

dear children's beauty and intelligence, there was no end to Yasoda's surprises of the most unimaginable and astonishing kind, the more as she lived from wonder to wonder and came to regard her child as more and more miraculous. At such awful presentation of world-panoramic scenes as that beheld by Yasoda within the tiny mouth of the mud-eating child the senses stagger with stupefaction of oversensation, the emotions are choked with out-thrusting emotions, ideas get giddied because of their vast sweep and velocity, the foundations of our immutable being and existence are carried through time and space with the whirling motion and acceleration of shooting stars and exploding planets, *the horror of creation is there* !, the indescribable beauty that blinds all observation and inhibits all expression; and nothing can bring back our mind to the old level of sanity and practical normality after such sudden revelations and heart-exploding palpitations, nothing except *the innate instinct of some natural love and familiar habit of affection* which asserts itself even as it did in Yasoda's breast and claims kinship of the Mortal and Finite with the Eternal and Infinite through the golden link of Love.

Sri Krishna's Life embodies the Evolution of Humanity

Indescribable are the ways of God and Nature and past all correct narration and description are the

changes and movements, the metamorphoses, of the eternal child who embodied in his life all the evolutionary stages of evergrowing humanity. Sri Krishna in his biography has always this dual character of the Individual as he was and the Universal he represented in his single life and person, even as the growing foetus recapitulates the growth of the whole race in its short period of intra-uterine development. His genius was one of evergrowing growth as all true genius is to a more or less extent. The men of genius like children have an elastic mind and body impressionable to every external and internal influence, growing richer and stronger with every passing moment and experience, but not getting hardened and callous; the soul of genius like the bodies of children is always aglow with the warmth and joy of unceasing growth. The genius of the race is realised in the growth of childhood and the genius of the individual in the growth of godly intelligence. When godly intelligence is born with godly beauty of form and figure, bewitching external shape, when kingly grace and benignity of look, friendly smiles and childish wiles, are mixed in one and the same child, when a sight of his unarms all anger and a sly trick perpetrated to the bewilderment of all observing eyes provokes the highest admiration—verily, that child is the adored of every mother's breast, that infant is the surprising angel of every watchful home and verily to him are reserved the richest cream of milk and heart's

purplest affection, the sweetest tears of laughter and the joyous anger of offended love. Never in the annals of the world have the sports and pastimes of an innocent child been made the subject of so many poems and sermons of superior excellence and the evident reason of their evergrowing popularity is because of the universal appeal this child makes to every child-loving, children-fond heart.

Sri Krishna is the Eternal and evergrowing Babe

Sri Krishna is the divine and all pervading child who is the sight and centre, the faculty and function, of all our orientations, ambitions and ideals. He is the babe within the arms who catches hold of our face and neck when we stoop to kiss the divine dimples on his softest cheeks; he is the object and interest of every action that engages our arms and limbs, the ecstasy of unceasing taste to enjoy which bend our hardest bones and break our toughest muscles with unconscious ease and unremitting toil. He is the babe who steals within our eyes unknown to ourselves and reveals to us our prettiest baby shapes when we look into his shining eyes; he is the little light of conscience that illumines our world of consciousness and reflects the reality of every concealed hope and clandestine desire. He is the child cradled within our breast who cheers to the music of the heart's unceasing throb; he measures with his pretty palms

the swell of this purplest heart-toy at every diastole and holds his mouth to its mouth at every systole to drink in the milk of human affections: he is the image of every man's identity and undying soul, the personal purpose and persistent element in all human efforts, the living make of every motive, the inward content of every experience, the unavoidable standard by which our life's labours and wages are judged, and the ever growing Form or Crucible into which flow our running years' accumulating experiences, the molten treasures of all joys and sorrows and the circulating currents of changing ideas, enlarging ideals and ennobling loves. He is the babe floating on the flowing current of life who swims on the rising tide of every surging pulse, the baby-corpuscle within the capillaries and the baby-nucleus within each cell who grows to the full size of the living body by taking in more of love's milk and tears. *He is the baby-cell of unceasing life, the cell of sudden and spontaneous growth and of the most miraculous metamorphoses and transfigurations.* He is the little bud inside the sprouting grass, the green inside every leaf, the paint on the petals of flowers and the fragrance of the flower-dust; he is the little bee that sucks the honey of every love-laden, hope-blossoming heart and carries the message of love and hope from heart to heart. His baby palms are always steeped in the dust of life's highway and roadside; he strews on his body *the starry dust*

of the heavens and the foot-soil of trudging, toiling humanity; he plunges with joy into the nebular puddles and neglected pools of human loves and tears and stains his divine and ethereal body with the supreme paint of earthly mud and attachments; he dances in the void on the dancing discs of floating atoms and shooting ions; this world of dust is His, His mouth conceals the Material Dust of the Universe—born of His blood they are merged in His blood and they live for ever within His all-embracing Heart!

The Meaning of the "Heavy Wooden Stake and Rope" Episode

Sri Krishna symbolises the childhood and youth of humanity that outlives and outgrows all social conventions and arbitrary restrictions. Even like Yasoda with her churning-pole strings the instituted authorities of home and society curtail the liberties of children with rules of discipline fit for less developed natures and even like Krishna humanity's growing genius is too undefined and unlimited to be bound up to the dead stakes and pillars of the past. If all vigorous youths do not rebel against their parents, it is because of the love they bear to their elders; and temporary conformity only gives added weight and momentum to the progressive idealist who is able to move the whole dead past with him and uses its dead weights against

the obnoxious growths of new sprung evils to uproot them. The essence of childhood is sport and liberty; children live in the air of liberty, live for the joy of sportive activity and live on love's milk and honey. Krishna's childhood is one broad illustration of what ideal childhood should be, of how all children, boys and girls, calves and kittens, birds and blossoms, should mingle together and enliven the hearts of themselves and others, of all players and spectators, by playing and loving together in unrestricted freedom of movement. Life is ultimately one joyous activity out and out; and unsophisticated childhood realises this truth more vividly in the happy and unenvious company of all living things than any other stage of life.

Sri Krishna's Adolescence and the Plausible Charge of Immorality attributed to Him

The most crucial part of Sri Krishna's biography is that which relates to his adolescence and the many extraordinary deeds attributed to him at this stage of his life. Nothing is more susceptible of wrong interpretation than what Krishna's biographers describe with such wealth of language and detail about his dealings with the young and blooming maidens of his own village. An entrancing theme of unending romance, a most excellent opportunity for the display of their wildest fancies, has been discovered

by the poets in this transitory and critical course of his life. Sex relations always create an amount of attention they do not deserve. The amours of a man of genius or of illustrious descent are given a disproportionate place of importance in the minds of the people that were better directed to the study of the life-ideals and life-work which have earned the subjects of study their name and fame. But the world is emphatically perverse about this point and in a popular hero, worshipped by the millions, on nothing is the hall-mark of popularity so deeply stamped as in the fervour and fixity of attention with which they listen to his sex-romances. The Lord of the Gopis is decidedly the most popular hero with all men and women of India and this is more emphatically so because of the most wonderful love-scenes and love-romances that are believed to have been enacted by him in his youth. There is no conventional concealment and shirking of details; no pruderies of taste are respected and the most prurient mind cannot wish for a more downright catalogue of sex-emotions with their many varieties of taste and fancied sensibilities than is provided by the over-enthusiastic chroniclers of Sri Krishna's life-history. Is it all true? Is it at all proper and becoming in a national prophet and leader, a great sage and spiritual teacher, to be so flagrantly opposed to the elementary rules of decency and still worse of conduct? Is Krishna as depicted by the poets

and as pictured by the populace, the youthful Krishna enjoying himself in the forests of Brindaban with his melodious flute and maidenly companions, is he anything better than a breaker of morals, a tempter, ravisher and debaucher of young girls, a privileged rake and princely libertine, an accomplished devil and arch-enemy of chastity? Such questions have been asked by many an indignant soul in all sincerity and it is our duty to face the question bluntly and clear up the mystery of the maligned morals of India's loftiest philosopher and her most illustrious and exalted genius.

The Poet-biographers of Sri Krishna's Life have given Concrete Shapes to Purely Psychical States and Soul-entities

Poetry is the language of love and sentiment, of suggestion and symbolism, of imagination and extravagance and of idealism and soul-entities. The poets speak always direct to the heart, move with its ever changing movements and observe the redness and reality of every new felt throb which the eye beholds not and the outside world is not aware of. The heart alone is witness to the heart and knows the full reality of all our loves, faiths and fears. Our solid exterior might conceal the inward agitation and confusion which an object arouses in our mind; the affected look of indifference might be the last

desperate effort of a heart that is grown madly in love with a person to whom it is reluctant to reveal the fact because of the pride in its own genuine love; the professed atheist might be the best of believers and the worst of the sceptics might conceal the most profound thirst for some soul-satisfying truth; our outward declarations and professions are often charged with a meaning quite the opposite of what they are supposed to convey apparently; the deepest sorrows betray not the least bubble of outward ebullition and the whirlpools of suppressed passions, the conflicting currents of submerged feelings, the melting of the ice-mountains and the formation of continental deposits are not manifest on the surface though prevalent on a huge scale throughout all time.

The characters in Sri Krishna's life history do not all of them stand for separate individuals of flesh and blood, and even those which have an obvious objective basis should be judged more in the light of their inward mental movements, passions and yearnings than in their visible outward gestures and muscular actions. Before we hasten to pronounce either Krishna guilty of downright, unabashed immorality or the poets guilty of gross exaggeration and vulgar misrepresentation, let us see what facts of actual experience and probable accomplishment, what natural aspects of youth and love, what real world of human feelings, the poets try to illustrate and embellish with the help of Sri Krishna's miraculous person,

THE EXACT AGE OF SRI KRISHNA'S ADOLESCENCE

Krishna of the Gopis from what we know from all accounts could not have been more than *fifteen years* in age at this period of his life. This is exactly the age of adolescence and budding youth, the age when sexual development is about to manifest itself in dawning sensations and most delightful dreams, in nascent revelations and perfervid ideals and in vague irritabilities and in wild restlessness. The critical period of life when boyhood leaps into the full bloom of youth ; when the body jumps on a sudden into a second race of rapid growth, when the voice breaks and the limbs lengthen as if drawn out of a covering sheath or tube, this period of surprises and sudden transformations is one of intensest interest and interminable difficulty for psychological study. The strange growth of adolescence is really the period of spiritual rebirth when even the body is made to feel its universal relation and race-function, when the individual feels the immensity of the task of race-reproduction and begins to value his person and beautify his mind and body for the due discharge of his life-regenerating duty. This is true with both boys and girls and it is at this period of life that they begin to dream deliberately of their marriage and future partner in life. Henceforth the mere eating, ravening organism, the heart that is bent upon sports of mere animal activity, the eye that is eager to catch sight of the

things-to-be-devoured, feels a new desire and overpowering passion to extend its arms in one wild embrace and to be embraced in return with no less warmth, to kiss and tear each other's heart and face in violent convulsions, to co-habit and live together, life with life and body with body, in ever renewing embraces and unceasing kisses. Henceforth man and woman is merged into one and their minds and bodies tend to mix and mingle together and dwell their double and dual life in all possible modes of ideal unions.

The Flowering Time of His Genius's Emotional Parts

What is most dilated upon by the poets and artists is this critical period of an extraordinary youth who, in addition to his individual person which was in itself most charming and attractive, symbolises in the sacred story the ardent youth of all humanity in all its unceasing freshness and outbursting fervour, its irrepressible ideals and entrancing visions. The girls of Brindaban were madly in love with their beloved Krishna who was to them a common brother and friend, and aye—God willing—the chosen husband of each as each one yearned and pined in her heart of heart. Krishna was to them the ideal of what a husband should be and there were none else whom they could possibly imagine to be more perfect. It was not only the cowherd maidens who laid their hearts at Krishna's feet; elderly mothers even of the Brahmin

caste were wont to worship this beauteous youth and the chastest of wives often went to the length of disobeying their husbands and incurring their bitter displeasure in their zeal to offer their homage to his divine person. Was it a wonder that girls and companions of his equal age and adolescence, girls equally irritable to the suggestions of love and beauty, maidenly mates and boon friends of his childhood, made him the object of their common attention, hemmed him in betwixt their embracing breasts, killed him with kisses and let him revive again only to be torn and mangled by their love ferocious hearts. Milkmaids are proverbially sportive and frolicsome and so was the Krishna of the Gopis, their common brother and adored lover of each in their fervid love. They lived their youthful life of exhilarating sensations in such happy inconsequence. It was the flowering time of a genius who had the greatest passion for the fair sex. He was even on the lowest estimate a most remarkable youth, the prince of the place where he lived in, the sun of unceasing joy and the cynosure of every observing eye; and his heart knew no other duty but to return love for love and kisses for kisses. He loved them openly and he was loved by them individually and collectively. There was no secret intrigue, no foul conspiracy by day or night. Fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, husbands, wives, all were equally aware of the irresistible charm that enticed the heart of each and all; and they acquiesced in it—

nay, were deeply thankful to heaven for the presence of such a divinity in their midst!

The Undeniable Proofs of Sri Krishna's Pure Love

If proofs are needed to make one believe in the transparent purity of Krishna's loves and attachments, if it is not evident to an unsophisticated mind what ideal of morals the example of Krishna upholds, an examination of some of the most popular and apparently vulgar episodes of his youthful life will help any reasoning man to come to his indubitable conclusions. The two most well known and popular episodes of Sri Krishna's youthful life are :

(1) The Rape of the Gopis' Robes : Its Moral Significance

The Gopi maidens were possessed with an abundance of animal exuberance and were sporting themselves lustily in the limpid waters of the Jumna giving free display to their bodily features, after the fashion of the degenerate and dissolute aristocrats of those days. Krishna's heart revolted against such scandalous practices of the luxurious and libidinous society; his mind was greatly disconcerted when he found his innocent sisters falling an easy prey to such fashionable social vices and he had remonstrated with them many a time *verbally* but in vain. What

was then required was a severe lesson of telling reproof and practical joke which could carry home to their mind the indelicacy, the awkwardness, the temptation and the helplessness of the situation they were creating for themselves by such thoughtless imitation of savage practices. Sri Krishna loved his Gopi sisters with a passion verging on adoration and his heart was filled with shame, indignation and remorse, when he found the heroines of his youth debasing themselves so frivolously by such shameless baths in the open. A high-souled but fastidious youth would have abhorred thereafter such incorrigibly immodest girls. A strong and sensual youth would have sought the favour of their including *him* amongst the chosen company. Cowardly youths, weak and vicious, would have concealed themselves behind the bushes and trees and feasted their eyes everyday with the lurid sight of women's nudity. But Krishna's heart was of the healthiest, holiest type that felt for his misguided maiden sisters more than they could ever feel for themselves. His was the sacred guidance of their souls and he thought *himself* alone responsible for their elevation or downfall. His life he owed to the sacrifice of a girl and all living girls were in his eyes the goddesses worthy of the highest respect and adoration.

Why should his dear playmates beshame themselves so low and if they would do so day after day, was it his duty merely to remonstrate in empty words,

to keep aloof from their company and leave them to their own shameful indiscretions and their serious consequences. What if some group of respectable travellers were to pass by that riverside, what would they think of his dear sisters? What if a band of ruffians were to swoop down on them in a sudden ambuscade and carry them bodily for forcible ravishment! He shuddered at the thought of his own past neglect and indifference to have allowed them to continue the vicious practice so long. Surely it needs a deep sense of holiness and regard for women's honour to rise above the temptation of sensuous sight-seeing, to suppress the irresistible inclination to mix oneself with the rising breasts of undraped beauties and to kill the animal craving for the continuance of such scenes and contacts. When we remember the extremely impressionable age of Krishna, his ascendency over the hearts of his maidenly sisters, their supreme willingness to do him any pleasure; when we bear in mind the strength of sexual temptation in the affairs of men, the overpowering influence of instinct over reason, of passion over principle and of animality over restraint in all matters of immediate sensuous gratification; when we are wise enough to recognise the extremely delicate nature of the task he undertook for himself and the high ideal of purity that actuated him mingled with no want of love towards the sinners—then alone can we come

to realise the godliness of the youthful nature who denied himself even the pleasure of an apparent noble action when all the while his heart was burning with the purest breath of sanctity.

It is the one glory of Sri Krishna that he is always misunderstood the most where he has sacrificed the most and stood himself as the greatest practiser of an impossible ideal. Who could imagine the familiar boy in the unconventional, though all too common, picture, the rogue with his load of loose sarees sitting on the tree-top, to be actuated by the noblest of ambitions to redeem his youthful sisters from the prevailing fashions and habitual vices of society. Krishna dared himself to be misunderstood and to be thought of by the wanton world as nothing better than a viciously cunning boy who wanted to enjoy himself an indecent joke at the expense of his maidenly sisters' honour. Such rancorous critics of his character are prepared never to forgive him for the sole and unsurpassed pleasure he was privileged to enjoy himself alone. It is the eyes of such critics that feast with avidity on the mere nude representations in the surface picture; and it is the heart of such unavowed hypocrites which craves silently for more living figures of *full* dimensions having the features depicted on the canvas. The youthful Krishna wanted not a martyr's crown for curing his misguided sisters of their vulgar

habit; the ardent Krishna was witness to God for the spotless sincerity of his motives and the girls were taught the lesson of shame and self-respect by being made to care for their body and keep it from unnecessary and untimely exposure.

He roused their sense of shame and modesty innate in every human breast. He sought not their illicit loves and intriguing affections. He accepted not what they could not offer in public with full dignity and freedom of mind. He sought the pure love of their hearts and taught them the shame of all evil connections, the worse so if committed in the dark. He sought their soul's pure love plainly, openly and publicly, to the full knowledge and recognition of one and all. They who were ashamed to stand nude before him in public, should they not be ashamed of such nudities in private? They who sought to tempt him by looseness of dress and slatternly habits, should they not know the shame of undress? No, such shame of body became not their fair sex and his dear sisters; and he taught them their self-responsibility by daring to be indelicate and by insisting upon openness when vice and immorality threatened to overtake them by the very strength of their self-subjection to evil habits, by the very extent and vulnerability of their contagious exposure and by their habitual inability to regain what they had once lost unless they stooped and exposed themselves to more and more evils.

(2) THE MOONLIGHT DANCE IN THE WOODS OF BRINDABAN: ITS ETERNAL AND UNMISTAKABLE MEANING

The other incident of Krishna's youthful life which by its elaborate detail and lavishment of ornament at the hands of the poets has come to attract the most glaring attention and ungenerous criticism is the episode of the Moonlight Dance in the woods of Brindaban. The immortal scene of the divine union of mortal hearts filled with the supreme joy of one soul-symphony, the most beautiful sight of this living world being transported into the transcendent realities of its inborn life and nature, the ever memorable scene of melody pictured in moonlight dreams, of joy personified in human shapes, of heart's unbounded love expressed in incommunicable gestures, the heavenly enactment of the eternal truth of all pervading Love by the side of the Jumna's everflowing waters stands in need of no moral vindication before any audience of living beings who have a moving, throbbing heart to boast. It was the day of marriage of the Gopi maidens to their all beloved Krishna, the real and actual marriage of all their ideal affections, the celebration of their soul-festival, the sanctified union of their spiritual parts—it was the day of the divine coalescence of all their living breaths and joys in one eternal, evergrowing, all embracing Being.

The Divine Link of Marriage and Its Many Varieties

All life is a marriage of ideals, a matching and coupling of the running streams of blood and passion, a union of ideas and association of images, an embrace of entities and growth of new facts, an impact of events and generation of new forces, a living together, a dwelling with and with, the march of every hour is a marriage of moment with eternity, the march of history is a marriage of fact with ever-growing experience and the march of the world and society is because of the marriage of the individual with the universal. That which gives us a continuity out of discrete parts and disparate proportions, that which unites in our mind a mountain and a mole-hill, that which thinks of the whole universe and a man, in the matching of the finite with the infinite, in the coupling of human soul with God, is it and is there in it any mathematical ratio, principle of progression or variation of function? Doth not every man think of himself as rivetted to the world around him and bound together with its substance with nails, clasps and hoops of sufficient size and strength as to carry him safe throughout eternity—Oh, is there any reason why we should talk of any *two* things together, associate any two ideas, but that we are made to marry and live together, we are born to mix together and live each in the other, and that we are parts and

particulars of one and the same living Whole and the living members thereof. All natural attractions and affinities are true. Nature never lies nor does it enforce its truths by any other method than immediate action and instinctive response; and Nature prevails with us ere we are conscious of our submission. Krishna's love of girls was a natural attraction and he loved them and loved them both as a child and as a boy. His love of girls grew everyday as his knowledge and familiarity with the girl-heart increased. He married himself many times *in sport* and married himself many more times *in his heart* and married himself *in fact* but twice.

The Ideal Marriage of the Heart

The marriage of the heart is one of pure love and blissful experience. The heart begins to marry itself long before the period of physical craving. It begins with the growth of boyhood and girlhood even ere the infant is initiated into the mysteries of education, established facts and institutions. As the bones of our body are built up suddenly by the mysterious physiological process which lays the solid foundations of our bodily framework in a few days, there is in our mind even at so early an age a sudden settling and grouping of elementary ideas aud feelings, a formation of the fundamental types and norms, of apperceptive masses and associative tendencies, which

develops into the regular life of the rational self day by day. Our so-called inherent and innate ideas are nothing other than those early ideation groups which are as much of our mind as the bone is of our body. Never to think or talk of a woman except as a sweetheart or sister, mother or daughter, never to let our mind forget the possibility of every girl becoming a bride and beloved some day, to woo every blooming maiden in your mind is to have the genius of the supreme poet and artist; and nothing short of the highest poetic inspiration can give us an insight into the eternal relations between man and woman.

Sri Krishna thought of the woman world around him in immediate relations to his personal self. All those above his age and all those already married were his mothers and sisters. But to every unmarried girl he had a secret message of love, were she a princess or a beggar. There is no girl who is not attractive enough in her maidenhood and there is none so remote as to be beyond the reach of thought and possibility. I catch in my heart the image of the radiant princess riding in her golden car of glory and this photographic reality of hers is *mine*, will she, nill she, consent to be my wife! The yonder rich man's daughter, the dazzling beauty who passes by my side heedless of my presence, that laughing maiden who is unconscious of my existence, this little fairy who is afraid of my strange person, all have a place in my heart, all are welcome to my heart's

richest feast of joy and I am bound to their person, my attractions are flung about their face and neck with invisible threads and cords. This is the secret meaning of Sri Krishna's marriage. The Lord of Love was not an abnormal monster and prodigy of lust. The Avatar of the Supreme was not born to ravish young maidens and prostitute all purity. His was the Divine Heart that attracted and was attracted in return by the hearts and souls of all men and women around him even as bodies in the physical state attract each other.

The Divine Song of Love

It is the melody of His heart strung to the full pitch of its awakening powers, the dream phantasy of moonlight splendours embracing the land and air and water in the still joy of sublime exaltation when all creation throbs vibrant and seems suspended by the soft breath of His mellifluous flute, when the natural motions of the living pulse and artery are hushed in one deep emotion, when the earth and heaven are merged in one divine impulse of all pervading love, when hearts alone are outflowing to each other and lose themselves in the Identity of the Universal Heart—it is this vision of world-harmony and universal joy, this divine dominion of love's empire and enthronement, this celestial glory of heart's potential charm, this irresistible inclination to marry

our hearts to the ideal of our choice and give ourselves the plenary possession of love's empire—it is this feast of heavenly fancy and highdowered imagination, this song of songs and soul enrapturing melody, that entices the hearts and souls of all poets and authors, biographers and admirers, audience and readers, all chaste mothers, devoted wives and maiden daughters, all human beings and all animate things that have a heart to own and soul to possess.

V. HIS MANHOOD AND MATURE LIFE WORK

Sri Krishna's Life was throughout One of Strenuous Activity

Sri Krishna was born to fulfil and never was a youth more suddenly called to face the sterner realities of life and activity than He. Behold what a sudden change was there, what sudden enforcement to leave at once the bed of roses and soft embracing breasts, to tear Himself most cruelly from the clasping arms of virgin beauties, and to prepare His heart and nerves, His arms and limbs, for the most deadly fights and unequal duels of murderous battles. Could a dissipated youth discharge himself so boldly and run the gantlet of concealed dangers without the least hesitation or flinching fear. The one incontestable proof of Sri Krishna's healthy morals and unimpaired strength, of His disciplinary habits and manly activities, is the long period of wars and battles which He waged with success again and again, the large schemes of colonisation and new settlement that He undertook under His own supervision, the

new empire and capital that He had to plant and nurture at the expense of His own blood and energy, and the many other calls of a political and royal life that entailed His unceasing attention and immediate execution at His own hands, not to speak of the various other kinds of activities in His capacity as a social reformer, original thinker and heaven-inspired prophet. It would astound any modern mind which prides itself in its industrious habits and in the quantity of work it is able to turn out every working day, even the most clever and business-like statesman of to-day would find it a staggering task of insuperable difficulty to put himself in the places and offices which Sri Krishna had undertaken and faithful discharged in His single person. To combine activities so different as town-planning, tree-planting, stable-laying and such like things on the one hand with such serious exercises of the mind as those involved in legislating for the conduct of a new ideal society, lighting upon new phases of human psychology, contemplating upon the probable perversions of pure ideals and diving deep into the sea of metaphysics to discover the connecting thread and pearls of the universal scheme of things; to be employed always either in preaching or practising, in building new kingdoms or novel systems of thought, in battling with swords in defence of His country or in warring with words in defence of His ideals; to be always at the service of others

whether He was skirmishing or debating, bivouacking or meditating; to be a King, warrior and statesman, poet, prophet and philosopher all in one is to be busy beyond the capacities of the most ambitious mortals and to be above all reproach of idleness and sensuous sleep on the lap of voluptuousness.

Sri Krishna was Primarily a Practical Genius

As stated above Sri Krishna was not a mere prophet or philosopher, not a mere visionary or idealist however highly exalted; He was a King, warrior and statesman, the founder of a new kingdom, the ruler of a vast province, the leader and guide of a whole nation and the dispenser of justice and bounties to millions of mankind from his royal court and treasury. He had the means to put into practice his ideal schemes of government and social reform. He created opportunities where He had none before and improved upon what were already existing. Though it is true He failed in the noble attempt to found an Ideal State and Society, though even His detailed schemes of social amelioration and democratic polity are lost to us and though the glory of success did not add to the lustre of His most spiritual ideals of everyday practice and universal observance, the true votary of the spirit of sacrifice stood not in need of any consolation for His material loss, the preceptor and propagandist of the religion of eternal

activity that asketh not but gives for joy of its own experience knew His own experience and individual daring for such tasks to be His best rewards and the only proper and ever increasing wages.

The Rise and Fall of Dwaraka, the Most Ancient Attempt at an Ideal State and Society

The Divine City of Dwaraka where women had higher privileges than men, where children were the common heritage of the state, where liberty of heart and affection was the foremost law, where warriors protected the weak, the able-bodied enjoyed themselves in unrestricted freedom of work and sports, where education was free and compulsory, where the cow's milk was the common food for children, where gold was the current coin and silk the common dress, where love was the supreme art of life and growth of every healthy kind was the supreme end of government—this ancient Utopia and Ideal Republic antedating those of Europe by many centuries, this city of ideals and creative work of a very high artist, this concrete realisation of a royal and godly dream and oh !—the catastrophe that overtook it, the sudden decay and stroke of misfortune that put an end to its existence—the history of the rise, growth and downfall of Dwaraka is the record of the attention and energy, wealth and ingenuity, lavished by King Sri Krishna on the immediate realisation of his ideals,

which same ideals shine from their distance not the less impressive and arresting our highest admiration through the vast debris of wreckage that strew the path of their progress very near the source. It is the currents of the loftiest origin and potency that break their bed and banks and seem to be scattered amidst the ruin of their own make, sometimes they even submerge and force a passage beneath the earth; but all the same their intensity is never lost and with increasing distance and tributary accumulations of time they spread again through the plains, even like the Ganges, a vast and plenteous stream of universal use and holiest reverence, a generator of life and carrier of life's burdens on to the eternal sea.

Sri Krishna too much in Advance of His Age

Sri Krishna was in His thoughts and ideals too much in advance of His age. He was far above the prelates and potentates who ruled the lands around His kingdom. His passion was the redemption of mankind from the artificial thraldom of the higher aristocratic classes. The weak and the lowly won His deepest sympathies as well as the good and deserving from every class irrespective of their birth. He loved women and children with an ardour truly divine and superhuman, with a poet's passion, a prophet's purity and a philosopher's conviction. In

the elevation of our sisters to a position of honour and respect, admiration and worship, in the centralisation of society round the sacred heart of women He found the true secret of all conservatism and progress, the only key to the safe-keeping and liberal use of all our virtues and the right method of meeting everybody in his own attitude and ideal. But the cynical, scoffing men amongst whom He was born were the least fitted to adopt such views of conduct towards a sex obedient to all their caprices, silent to all their insults and never impatient to assert its own rights and privileges. Not content with the mere rejection of His zealous views and doctrines, the kings and divines of those days began to misinterpret His poetical expressions of love and beauty and read obscene meanings and licentious purposes where He had meant the marriage of human heart with heart and the righteous conversion of all our joys into the supreme and abiding one of spiritual beauty.

The Bitter Opposition of the Kings and Priests

Though He had come to the world to fulfil and though His work was always one of grand construction, during the course of His fulfilment and constructive work Sri Krishna had to incur the bitter opposition of both the aristocratic and sacerdotal classes. The kings were unwilling to be told that their business was to work for the good of their

subjects and that the only legitimate source of royal authority was the ability to enforce and propagate righteousness amongst all classes of people. The priests were enraged to be reminded that even the holy Vedas, the once revealed Word of God, were nothing when compared to the Eternal Reality that was being revealed through every increasing experience, appearance and phenomenon, and that God, the Eternal Fact and Evergrowing Experience of every individual, was the direct and immediate source of highest inspiration and authority incomparably superior to the recorded words and sounds of Rishis as transmitted by prejudiced scholars and interested persons. The priestly anger grew to one of intense hatred when they were denied the claims of their divine birth unless they laboured their hearts and minds in the service and propagation of divine love and truth. Learned pundits sneered at His new gospel and with profound sagacity pointed out His unfitness to learn the Vedas or even to talk about them because of His suspected *lowbirth*! Autocratic and arrogant despots derided His fanciful schemes and ideals of government which they directed Him to preach to the mute cows and calves He was so very fond of. Everywhere unvarying opposition and derision, unconcealed contempt, gross calumny, vulgar vilification and obscene treatment was meted out to Him *during the earlier part of His strenuous life.*

There were of course a few exceptional men who revered him and had the highest regard for His spiritual ideals and they were the foremost sages and saints, some of the very best amongst the illustrious names of Ancient India. The support of the select few was the greatest encouragement Sri Krishna ever had in His life-mission. Always He was appreciated and understood by the very highest men and women and their genuine admiration was the mirror and standard by which He judged and measured Himself and His ideals. Years of endless toil and untiring application to His life's self-chosen tasks brought Him name and fame by slow degrees, till at last He found Himself a king whose power was felt and recognised all around and a philosophic prophet whose views were respected by the learned world and accepted wholesale by the very best thinkers.

His Alliance with the Pandavas and His Sudden and Superabundant Popularity

It was then He made the alliance with the Pandavas and the life-long union and ideal-friendship that existed between Him and the Five Brothers, particularly that between Arjuna and Himself, was a source of increasing strength and joy, solace and satisfaction, to both sides in all their sorrows and struggles, sufferings and disappointments.

Sri Krishna became suddenly popular with all the priestly sects when He came to be known as the trusted friend and royal relation of the renowned and regnant Pandavas. He was then subjected to such a clamorous and confounding popularity as the Brahmins alone could exhibit and express in their long winding phrases. The humble prophet of the wilds and the unconventional philosopher, the Non-Vedic Teacher and Nanda, the shepherd's, foster-son, became at once by a stroke of magic the idol of the most exclusive and arrogant priests, their greatest advocate and apostle, and their most sacred guardian of spiritual anthority. When in the great Rajasuya Sacrifice at Indraprastha Sri Krishna was offered the foremost place and observance of personal honour by King Yudhistira in defiance of the popular wish of the assembled kings and princes, the Brahmins opportunely took the cue from their royal patron and raised a regular hue and cry of acclamation and extolled the Lord of Dwaraka in the most felicitous language of flattery. Everafter throughout His life the Brahmins professed themselves to be His devout admirers and humble disciples and pestered Him day and night with praises of His divine wisdom and protestations of their sincere attachment to His spiritual cause.

Admiration is an emotion that increases with every repetition. Even the affectation and assumed garb of acquiescence in another's appreciation for his hero

earns the glad assent of our will-to-behold as we are bidden to do; and nothing carries so much weight with society as a running current of opinion that always runs in one direction to our advantage and is made to run and flow more and more, day after day and year after year.

How the Pandavas became the Patrons of the Brahmins

The Pandavas were the unlucky sons of Pandu who were subject to ill-fortunes of every kind ever since their birth. They were the objects of inappeasable hatred to their cousins, the Kauravas. Though Kshatriyas by birth the Pandavas had enjoyed none of the luxuries of the ruling class and were forced to live from childhood by their own labours and mutual help. The bond of brotherhood was the strongest between the five and the want of superfluities only tended to strengthen the natural affinities and affections inborn with them. Their widowed mother was to them more than an empire and they lived in the luxury of loves and tears more happily than the richest imperial princes. Disinherited princes as they were, they had no reason to be proud of their birth and so they moved freely with all classes of people, especially the poorer Brahmins whose industrious habits and homely affections won their unstinted respect and admiration. The continuous ill-treatment they had from

their Kshatriya cousins had disillusioned their minds about the boasted theory of Kshatriya benevolence, charity and chivalry. In their days of humiliation and oblivion they had observed men and things for themselves free from the besetting evils of intriguing courtiers and pandering hirelings. The moral element had access to their heart through their thin clothings and starving stomachs; the divine conscience had come to dwell in their souls when they had nothing earthly to boast of. The Brahmin companions were always ready with maxims and apothegms of ideal kingship and it was not entirely without an eye for futures favours that the clever priests courted their humble company. With sage dignity they used to prophesy the ultimate triumph of Virtue and the Pandavas, the restoration of righteousness and their lost kingdom; and the homeless wanderers and exiles from palaces were only too glad to get such momentary glimpses of the glory that once was theirs and the grandeur that was assured to become once more theirs in the near future. The astrologers and the soothsayers, the pundits and the priests, had ample rewards for all their real or pretended feats of learning when the Pandavas returned to power; and the Brahmin cause came to be championed for their good-luck by one of the foremost of Kshatriya princes. As the Kauravas were the inveterate enemies of the Pandavas, they too sought by every means in their power to bribe clever Brahmins into

their service. Thus the virus of personal rivalry changed the impetus and course of the current from a class war between the Kshatriyas and the Brahmins into an internecine family squabble between Kshatriyas and Kshatriyas with the time serving, opportunist Brahmins abetting both sides to their mutual destruction. In the great war that followed the family feuds of the Pandavas and the Kurus all the Kshatriya princes took part on one side or the other and total destruction of the whole fighting class of Aryavarta was the tragic result.

Sri Krishna Strove His Best to Avert the Great War

Sri Krishna adjured the aggressive side to abstain from war and implored and begged for a policy of peace on any humble basis of repatriation to the dispossessed and ill-treated party who ought to have had in justice half the empire for their legitimate share. Yet the irresponsible autocrats in power advised by their evil ministers were bent upon having everything to themselves and scoffed even at all thoughts of advantageous arbitration and cheap compromise. " War, war," they cried to the pitch of their passion—perverted voice and war they had in the end to the bitterest bounds of destruction. The whole of Aryavarta was arrayed in two camps and men who erstwhile were friends and relations took opposite

sides as the whim of the moment or personal inclination suggested to themselves and fought against each other like life long enemies. Nations were leagued against nations, tribes against tribes, and armies clustered to the camps of the antagonists in hundreds of thousands. The whole continent was converted into one war zone and the fateful battles of unnumbered hosts took place day and night in the bloody field of Kurukshetra for a continuous period of eighteen days. At last the bare victors, the five regal brothers alone, were left alive in body, all the rest of the hundreds of thousands who fought most heroically on both sides were swept by the current of universal destruction.

The Moral of Great Wars

Great wars and world convulsing conflicts are not the result of petty purposes and superficial causes. Something good and substantial in human nature has been ignored, some strong fibre of human heart has been twisted and distorted; some blatant theory of State or sacrosanct theory of Birth, some futile dream of World-Empire or spurious dogma of Caste Supremacy, has been imposed upon the simple heart and head of humanity against its natural scope for development, thwarting its healthy life and growth and threatening to choke at last its very life-breath. When men sacrifice their brothermen in thousands and millions at the altar of

some fetish, be it political, social or religious; when the labour of sweating, thirsting humanity is made vain and profitless, is made dangerous and degrading and is denied its natural wages of health, food and innocent enjoyment; when men in power conspire for their still better advancement and for the bitter ruin of others, when men of talents prostitute their gifts in the base service of unscrupulous tyrants; in those critical periods of human society, in such climacteric hours of humanity's history, when nothing good arrests the attention of the governors who are too much absorbed in their selfish intrigues and fratricidal wars, when nothing howsoever bad and wicked rouses the anger of the oppressed who are too weak to rise in rebellion, then and then alone a universal upheaval, a world conflagration, a man to man war and nations against nations leagues burst into life, put forth their best efforts and fling themselves body and soul into the all consuming blaze—and they that have stood for right and justice, they that have the fire of God in them come out of the ordeal unscathed and rise again out of such struggles victorious and glorious, purified of all their dross, and melted and moulded into a brighter and better cast.

The Immediate and Ultimate Results of the Great War of Ancient India

The victorious Five Brothers were the only remnants of the Kshatriyas who took part in the

greatest battle of all Indian History. The real victory of the war went to the enemies of the Kshatriyas, the Brahmins, who survived the shock because they were not in the same battered ship. The great storm of destruction flew past the concealed heads of the priests and they came out of their hiding only when it was time to greet their ever generous patrons and invincible heroes, the heaven-born Pandavas. The Pandava victory was a Brahmin victory and the Pandava rule was a priestly rule. Thus did asceticism triumph over sensualism and conservatism triumph over atavistic barbarism in the end, not by fighting against evil but letting it kill itself.

Nothing would be more unjust than to agree with the priestly chroniclers that all the Kshatriyas of those days except of course the Pandavas were hell-born demons whose degree of execrability was in direct proportion to the innate godliness of the God-mouth sprung Brahmins. If all the Kshatriyas had not been annihilated—which itself is perhaps an exaggeration—they woud have given a different account of themselves as they were able to do in ages before. A few centuries back the Kshatriyas were decidedly the diviner and godlier caste what with their just rule and practical morality, their wise statesmanship and virtuous benevolence, and above all, with their sublime consciousness of the Eternal Presence and their self-taught discipline and supreme

loyalty to the Eternal Law. The authors of the greater number of the great Upanishads were Kshatriyas, the greatest benefactors of the Society were Kshatriyas whether as Kings, statesmen or soldiers and not the least as the far-seeing founders and munificent patrons of the philosophic academies and theological seminaries. Degeneracy followed with increasing caste rigidity, with the death of individual and social responsibility. Caste kills the conscience of those within its fold; the greatest enemy to the birth and development of a purely spiritual conscience is pride of birth and inherited prejudice. As the Kshatriyas prided themselves more and more in their own caste privileges they ceased to be the great kings, statesmen and philosophers, they were before. To spite the Brahmins they starved their own soul and the consequence was first their spiritual and moral death: physical death was the inevitable result of such a soulless body. The corruption of the Kshatriyas was the worst because they were once the best people in the land. It was they who were *responsible* for the growth and safety of the society in contrast to the priests who have never held *themselves* responsible for any earthly progress because of their innate inability and acquired dislike for all practical reforms and concrete methods of good conduct. The Brahmins have ever been the irresponsible theorists, the purely academical teachers, the unworldly

aspirants, the crafty priests and the selfish intriguers on earth; and even after death their eschatological persuasions cannot induce them to hope for anything better than a self-solitariness and individual salvation.

The Brahmins have ever been the typical conservatives who try to preserve whatever good has been cultivated in the land, who try not to contribute their own individual share and increase the existing hoard but exert their best to possess in entirety within their own hands whatever has been acquired already. Conservatism is the pride of possession and personal property, the pride of the privileged classes who keep everything valuable as their own inherited assets, who cling to good as they do to gold as a valuable object of possession, who extol virtue as they honour wealth as a sign of substantial acquirement, who keep the very houses of God, the temples of worship and works of art, as appendages to their personal dignity and as fields for the display of their personal distinctions; the conservative classes are the most clamorous advocates of war, of holy war in the name of Eternal God, whenever their rights and possession are in danger of being shared by others. It is the literary classes who extol war to the utmost and it is the idlers who claim most the fruits of desperate struggles and deadly fights. The Brahmins were blessed in their claims to victory as there were none to dispute their share. The great War did establish in fact, after its true lessons were forgotten, the

supremacy of the Brahmins and the prevalence of caste-institutions and anti-social ideals. The ultimate result of the Mahabharata War was the triumph of priestcraft over sovereign-craft, of individualism over collectivism, of caste over community, of conservatism over liberalism, of culture over conscience, and of limited virtues over all embracing righteousness.

YUDHISTIRA'S EMPIRE WAS AN UNREFORMED PRIEST-RIDDEN STATE

The Lord found the survivors of the Great War, the Pandava Brothers and their Brahmin preceptors, all of them unwilling to co-operate with Him in His constructive work. For as yet only the work of destruction necessary for every great construction had been done. The path had been cleared, the enemies to life and righteousness had been despatched to their proper abodes and the world waited for a new ploughing and sowing, a new cultivation and harvesting, at the hands of the great victors which they were unwilling to begin and pursue. The great war had proved the eternal worth of the Brahmin virtues and the perdition of the Kshatriya vices. The priests were grateful to Krishna for helping the Pandavas to victory; but their gratitude could no further extend than in lip services and literary appreciations. It was not profitable to follow the cowherd king who knew how to protect His folk

while there was the innocent and ever plenteous milch-cow, the Emperor Yudhistira, who was crying to be released of his royal treasures and praying for the privilege of pouring the whole kingdom's wealth on their sacred head. When the new king was installed on his throne the Brahmins were his ministers and servants, advisers and agents, and they were in a body opposed to all changes affecting their status, prestige and pecuniary interests. Good King Yudhistira had no independent will of his own. He loved Sri Krishna and adored Him fervently in his heart of heart. But he had not the head to plan and the hand to execute the great schemes of social reconstruction advocated by the Lord. His persuasions and beliefs were too much coloured with the priestly bias and many years' habitual stain and touch of practice could not be washed and cleansed in a moment. Yudhistira was averse to making such radical changes as were necessitated by the teachings of the Avatar if at all they were to be put into practice. The priests flattered the name of Sri Krishna and formally accepted the fundamental principles of His philosophy; but by many subtle processes of symbolic interpretation, systematic lying and subterfuge, they were able to convince the royal disciple of Vasudeva that what he, the king, did according to their sacred interpretation and spiritual advice was the right and the only righteous thing.

The Brahmins were not wholly undeserving of their Claims

Well did the Brahmins deserve much of their claims and privileges, though they were prone to exaggerate their parts for good. The one attractive feature of their system was the general purity of family life amongst their own caste and the great emphasis they laid upon the fulfilment of family duties. In an age of moral bankruptcy when kings in royal assembly sought to disrobe a defenceless queen in public, in an age of disgraceful sensualists and degenerate despots, of many-kinged anarchism and mephitic decay of moral health, to have preserved the ideal of chastity and family ties, to have adhered to some belief against all unbeliefs, to have disciplined the mind and body against the inroads of savage lust, to have believed in a God and Divine power in however limited a sense when it was the ambition of every unscrupulous king to usurp himself into the Almighty throne, to have felt apprehensions of their mortal limitations and to have adapted themselves to the needs of the hour, were the saving qualities and unfailing instruments which rescued the Brahmins from the flood of universal destruction and enabled them to pitch the flag of victory over their enemies' camp unaided by any brute force or bloody enterprise. The Brahmins succeeded then and have always succeeded ever after

in the struggle for life because of their abiding moral qualities and readiness to adapt themselves to the changing circumstances. The evil comes when the Brahmin ceases to struggle and tries to bring others under his subjection.

The Brahmin is an angel in adversity but a veritable devil in prosperity. He knows the secret of patient labour and silent sacrifice; but when it comes to a matter of distributing honours, status and privileges, he would have nothing short of the whole and all to himself exclusively. The Brahmin is the best of servants and subordinates, but he is the worst of masters and soul-smothering tyrants. The Brahmin is sensible and sentimental to a degree, but he thinks sensibility and sentiments to be his exclusive heritage and inborn characteristic. The Brahmins deserve much as good men on earth, while they deserve nothing less than the worst of castigations and heavy bastinadoes when they assume themselves as akin to the Gods!

The Brahmins, the Friendliest-Enemies to Sri Krishna's Ideal

None appreciated the Brahmin virtues more than the Lord Sri Krishna who found in them much excellent material on which He hoped to work for better and ever increasing use. The Lord knew notwithstanding His partiality for the priestly classes

that their golden exterior and outward garb of godliness betrayed under His constant touch and insistent pressure the hardest unwillingness and darkest reluctance to work for the good of others, to educate all men desirous of acquiring truth and to surrender their selfish interests in the elevation of the submerged classes. The Lord was now past His middle age and was left in the full enjoyment of all His hard-earned wealth and power, while His personal fame and prestige increased day by day. He had ample leisure and felt the want of nothing but the co-operation of all intelligent and enlightened men for the prosecution of His life-mission. The World-Teacher and Avatar of the Supreme Intelligence, He felt nothing so keenly as the absence of a class of ideal teachers and disciples who could carry His germinal ideals of everlasting growth to the four corners of the world and plant them deep in the hearts of all men and women irrespective of the many distinctions of birth and rank. In the Brahmin caste He saw the possibility of recruiting such a noble army of selfless workers and spiritual leaders, if He could really induce them to accept His gospel. But the bulk of the Brahmins, though they felt flattered at such importunate requests for their services from the greatest born genius of the soil, were never nearer to practising His heavenly commandment of love and equality. They loved themselves the more for all

the love and respect the Lord bestowed on them; they received rich presents from His hands, were incessantly loud in His praises and thereby made themselves the most bepraised of all. To work for the liberation of mankind with faith in God and love towards all, to be the teachers of the humble and the ignorant, the helpers of the poor and despised, to be the cleansers of the unclean and the purifiers of the impure, to impart the divine fire of truth and knowledge into all hungering human hearts, to live by truth and lead others by the light of truth alone, to kill all superstitious fears and cynical doubts and to strengthen the minds of mankind with the heavenly manna and ambrosia of true science based upon ever-growing experience—this was a task which most of them were themselves unfitted to perform in full and which they were unwilling to practise even as far little as they could.

Why did the Age of Decay follow the Great War?

The Great War in India was not followed by a grand era of reconstruction and revivifying ideals. The Age of Decay or Kali set in this great land because the survivors of the Great War were not willing to live honestly and strenuously and grow well once more the fruits of enriching and ennobling experience. The vigorous optimism of the Vedas and earlier Upanishads was replaced by the universal

philosophy of fatalistic pessimism because men thereafter lost sight of the empire of love and liberty for which their fathers and elders had fought, they ignored the great issue for whose successful deliverance the whole continent was thrown into indescribable confusion, they never cared to cultivate the precious seed of victorious virtue on the soil made fertile by the blood of the fallen heroes—the field of battle spread the contagion of decaying flesh and the whole atmosphere of thought and belief, of energy and enterprise, was poisoned by the pestilence provoking death. India has ever been the land of some plague or other ever after the Great War. The land where liberty of the soul was held as the only possible and perfect ideal for all living men, where liberty of thought and speech, of service and sacrifice, was the life-breath and inspiration of many many a noble soul, the land where great men sought not reward for their work, fees for their learning and fame for their genius, the glorious land of the Ancient Aryans where the bards sang the heavenly hymns of Creation, of Dawn and Sunrise, as the birds do, in spontaneous joy and ecstasy of selflessness, the India of effulgent beauty and holiest liberty became the land of sorrows and servility, of castes and creeds, of priests and princelings, of beggars and slaves—India became the home of famine and plague, of never ending disease and decay ever since the light of love and liberty was lost sight of by the survivors of the Great War.

The True Meaning of the Age of Kali and the Only Possible Cure for Its Many Evils

The age of Kali is an age of instant rewards and punishments, of incessant enterprise and adventure, of unlimited ambitions and all embracing ideals. It is an age of surprising evils to all those who are unwilling to be stirred into strenuousness and it is an age of decay for those who are unwilling to live and grow, to move, improve and progress. The Kali age is the age of activity and industry, of ever-increasing sensations and ever-widening sensibilities, of ever-growing interests and insatiable ambitions, of universal ideals and world-moving forces. To live in the Kali age with feet on earth requires a faith that fastens us to the realities of everyday life, an orientation that informs our attention with the laws and objects of ever-growing experience, and an energetic determination to live with life till everything that is dear and valuable in us is dug out of our living self by the instruments of our own bodily limbs and mental faculties. The age of Kali is the age of work and toil, of function and response, of attention and industry, and perseverance and persistence to live by one's own life-breath and ability to live. It is the age of democracy and equality of opportunity where each man strives his best to raise himself to the highest level by dint of his own exertion. The only cure for the evils of the Kali age is Conscience and

conscientious awareness of one's own defects, and continuous corrections and adjustments to improve our failing part in life. *Conscience demands of us both individual responsibility and universal consciousness.* To think that others like oneself are living for the good fruits and joys that life may bring them during the course of their labour, to feel for and feel with all other individuals whom we come into contact with and include in our circle of attention, not to deny others what we would not have denied to us, not to judge of others in the way we would not suffer ourselves to be judged, not to arrogate all the riches of earth and heaven and the unlimited glories of God's empire to our exclusive use, *to live and let live,* to love all even for the sake of being loved in return is the only possible escape from the encroaching evils of this Iron or Kali or Competitive and Adventurous Age.

India's Material, Moral and Spiritual Poverty in Spite of Such Inexhaustible Hoarded Wealth

Famished is the heart of India for want of the revivifying food of life though plenty grows in the land and plenty has been stored for ages. Thirsty is the soul of India for the nectar of spiritual truth though eternal rivers and currents of thought have been flowing from the empyrean heights of the Himalayas and flooding the plains year after year

and ages after ages. Priest-craft and caste pride, inequality of man and man, unfair ascendency of man over woman, famine, plague and pestilence, child-death, starvation and suicide have stamped their agelong prevalence on the beautiful face and features of the once Resplendent Queen of the Orient; and vainly does the mother of the many millions cry to her wanton children to desist from hating each other, throwing mud and filth at each other's face, to cease from conspiring for the ruin of their own household—and vainly, alas, she implores them in the name of her Most Illustrious Offspring to be up and awake for the good of the whole community and never—never—to be indifferent to the uplifting of the submerged masses.

The Downfall of Indra and Antiquated Authority: the Supremacy of Experience

The death-knell of Brahminism, of body-worship, book-worship and fetish-worship, has been sounded long ago by Sri Krishna when He denied the supreme authority of the Vedas and Scriptures and appealed to man's living, growing experience. From the day the Indra of the thunder-bolt found himself defied by a low-caste cowherd boy while holy Brahmins were extolling him as the highest high, from the hour when the antiquated god of the

priestly heaven was forced to feel that his inflated dignity was nothing more than an artificial making of his flatterers' impure breaths, Orthodoxy has always entertained a secret fear of Sri Krishna's teachings and doings; and the Brahminical priests have always succeeded in retaining their position not by opposing the inevitable tide of advancing truth but by formally accepting it and professing themselves to be its foremost advocates and exponents. The Religion of Love is bound to prevail and India shall regain her original glory and even exceed it when the children of India are brought up on human affection and taught to love each other as was the Divine Child of Gokula. When mothers impart the milk of human kindliness to their sucklings and recuperate their heart's store of love by loving the Common Child of All Mankind, when maidens love the Ideal Lover and sell not themselves for fanciful fripperies, when fathers insist not upon their intelligent sons to follow the dead unmeaning customs, when the Youths of Inida are bold enough to raise their hands against tyranny of every kind, when the evil and the corrupt, the vulgar and the vicious, are done to death without regard to their accidental age, caste or status, then shall India be once more free and live in joy and peace and plenty. And though during the course of the struggle the priests may hurl the most thundering imprecations, the cynics might scoff with the most biting satire, though the strong might

hesitate and the wise demur and even though the very heavens might seem to be against us and rain unceasing obstacles and subject us to sudden strokes of misfortune, the faithful hearts that keep company with the Lord shall feel themselves at home under every change of weather and circumstance, shall find themselves strong enough to move mountains from their earthly bed and hold them lightly as delicate water-proofs above their head and walk with increased skill and glory after the storm on the fair, green and refreshed earth.

Sri Krishna the Servant of Humanity

Sri Krishna lived and died in the service of Humanity. He is supreme because of His deliberate loyalty to the Eternal Law. The sovereign principle of His life and regulating rule of conduct was spontaneous action, all harmonious movement and development, heart-felt service and incessant sacrifice. Sri Krishna is the prophet of Universal Democracy, the philosopher of Labour, Law and Liberty. He is the poet-priest of Beauty, the ardent worshipper of Adorable Love and the votary and willing servant of Spontaneous Activity. The doctrines of Sri Krishna are the divine laws of eternal existence, His teachings are the fundamental rules of ever-growing righteousness, His ideals are the highest any human mind can conceive of and His whole life and genius is

informed and inspired by the one ruling passion for *collective growth and communal joys.* He flung Himself headlong into the sea of existence, threw Himself deliberately into the whirlpools and maelstorms of social confusions, He swam with the most advancing waves into the inlets and creeks running between overhanging rocks, He dived down the unfathomable depths and danced on the crests of the highest tides of social activity with nimble feet and fearless heart, because He had no weight of selfish interests to drag Him down and because His mind was always equipoised and felt not the least difficulty in diving or flying, in running before or behind. Sri Krishna had not the least personal purpose or hatred to embroil Him in the promiscuous affairs of the world. He always mixed Himself wholly and entirely with the larger world around Him even as the river mixes with the sea and found Himself not lost but magnified in volume and strength, not rolling down beneath but buoying up and becoming one with the universal one and in constant touch with it through every inflow and outflow of the heart even as the mouth of the estuary is in touch with the sea.

VI. HIS PHILOSOPHY, HIS PERSONALITY AND PERMANENT INFLUENCE ON MANKIND.

The Philosophy of Sri Krishna is Inextricably Bound up with His Personality

Sri Krishna was no systematic philosopher nor a bookish student. Yet when it comes to a matter of cogent reasoning and consistent development of the central idea none could be more precise than He. The fame of *The Bhagavad-Gita* as a philosophical treatise is indeed supreme. But it should not be supposed that Krishna, the Charioteer, had ready at hand a summary of all His thoughts and beliefs to be flung on Arjuna's face at the critical hour of battle. Such a missile of useful and useless thoughts could little appeal to the heart of the despondent Gudakesa. It was the divine fire of prophetic exhortation, the all-persuasive power of poetic inspiration and the emphatic assurance of the eternal voice of God that won Arjuna's heart to himself, armed his soul with the strength of its universal kinship and transformed his visions of victory and defeat into one sight of

eternal and endless activity, into one awareness of the imperative call of life to live and to do away with those who would not let it live in righteousness. The living, walking diseases of society that were armed with weapons of healthy men's industry, the deadly poisons who fed fat upon the blood of others and called for more of living blood to be shed, the degenerate organisms and decaying social limbs headed by the despicable Duryodhana were no fit objects of compassion or commiseration ; and Arjuna needed a strong corrective of sentimental emotion to ply his surgical sword and knife, a severe dose of cathartic medicine to drive away his worming affections, a terrific inoculation of the war-poison and war-fire to make him consume the most virulent germs of social ills with impunity : and *Gita* was this strong corrective, this severe catharsis and this terrific inoculation. The Divine Physician who cured Arjuna of his fondness for earthly ills and foul diseases, the Dissector of the hero's mind who probed to the full his immoral indecisions, evil hesitations and vicious reverences, the Exorciser of false sentiments, fictitious fears and fetichistic beliefs, the Enemy of lies of every kind, the Dispeller of darkness and the Restorer of life's native health and energy, what the Avatar of the Original administered to Partha was a touch and taste of the eternal life—and down to the innermost fibres of his living being flashed the lightning fire of this new perception and Arjuna stood all aglow with

the radiant energy of spontaneous vision and supreme faith that beholds the Ineffable glory of the Never-Setting-Sun !

When doth God Visit Our Souls and When do We See World-Visions ?

It is not the words of the *Gita* nor even their subtle spirit and suggestiveness that could awaken in our mind the same sights and visions as were beheld in truth by Arjuna. Such glimpses of infinity, such visions of starry wildernesses in broad daylight, such veridical revelations of eternal reality to mortal eyes, are possible to us not by the strength of repeated recitations nor by our cleverness in discovering a hundred mysterious meanings where there is one plain and direct one—the vision of God comes to us when we really thirst for it and yearn and pine with all centred heart for a touch or sight of the Eternal Beauty. God visits our living heart and dwells within it even as the fragrance within the flower when all the spreading petals of our blossoming sensations, memories, hopes and longings, are outspread to the vision of the Life-awakening-Sun—then blow the trumpets of our mind with joy and flash forth the darting lights of thoughts and sudden transforming insights; then we see the solid earth breaking beneath our feet and bursts to our view her blood-red heart that throbs in chime with eternity; then this world

of all objects and things is informed with a new life and energy, with a new light and beauty. God's Beauty becomes revealed to us not as an object but as a Presence that permeates through and through our being and fills us with the fulness of feeling and wholeness of existence till we live extended in one infinitude and own no periphery.

The World-Vision of Arjuna was the Result of His Fundamental Faith in the Oneness of all Existence

Arjuna's heart had been filled with one supreme faith ere he was aware of it. His soul had been already set in tune with the infinite ere he became conscious of it. He was already floating in the abysm that buoyed him up and let him behold from the crest of the topmost wave, he was in constant and continuous commerce with the whole world ere he came to the battle-field to exchange his arrows; and all that he stood in need of to enable him to know himself as one with the eternal and the infinite was a looking around, a looking before and after and a looking throughout. He forgot the living present when looking on the dead past, he forgot the imperative and instantaneous immediate in the hurry of the hesitating mediate and he forgot the Eternal-Evergrowing by thinking too much of an engrossing custom and halting purpose; and this forgetfulness was his moral shortsight and spiritual blindness which the Divine Physician and

Surgeon removed by administering to his soul added strength of memory and awakening intelligence till at last he was able to observe with microscopic and telescopic eyes and did discover for himself the World-Form and All Visible Reality that from eternity has been visible with the dazzling splendour of a million million suns and becomes the more visible to human experience the more we extend our powers of observation, our thirst for discoveries, our retentive mind, reasoning faculties and reverent quest for truth.

The Full Meaning of Sri Krishna's Words is Revealed only in the Light of His Deeds

The potential power of Sri Krishna's personality partakes of the potency of God. And verily one can never understand the words of Sri Krishna without relation to His deeds and so also the right understanding of His deeds requires familiarity with the universal truths and ideals which He tried to exemplify by His actions. The popular conceptions of Sri Krishna are often more profound and fraught with more sublime significance than what a learned pundit would be able to represent with quotations from Bhagavad-Gita glossed of course with his own tawdry commentaries. Sri Krishna's personality prevails even to-day in all its irresistible charm and thaumaturgic power over the heart. The philosophic

cult was never popular and Krishna himself did not originate or advocate any distinctive system or school of thought. The schoolmen were the products of later and mediæval ages.

Sri Krishna was Born to give to Humanity Its Heart and Experience

Sri Krishna is an out and out Realist who appeals to the unimpeachable, irrefutable experience of all individuals. His religion is the realisation of all possible loves by the exercise of the living, expanding powers of life. His is the positive religion of Love, Joy and Liberty. God is not only Eternal but also Evergrowing, not merely the One but the Infinite, not merely Existence but also Growth. God is both Destiny and Divinity, the Destiny that is destined to *develop* itself into the Divine. God is both Love and Liberty, the liberty that is free to love by the eternal and infinite measure of liberty and build all the countless worlds and things for the creation and liberation of more of loves. Change and movement are endless and ever continuing and there is only One Universal Soul that is the Past, Present and Future, that is One Evergrowing Experience to which contribute all individuals of every age and clime.

The Divine Process of Eternal and Evergrowing Evolution is as follows :

From . . . . To

The Potential—The Possible—The Phenomenal—The Practical—The Actual.

Activity—Attitude—Interest—Ideal—Experience.

Destiny—Creation—Conception—Consecration—Divinity.

Nature—Manifestation—Change—Necessity—Spontaneity.

The Extensive—The Common—The Continuous—The Universal—The Individual.

Existence—Time—Movement—Space—Growth.

The Eternal—The Infinite—The Beautiful—The Good—The True.

Liberty—Law—Life—Righteousness—Love.

The Ought—The Heart—The Loveliness—The Adorableness—The God.

Life is the Child of Love and Beauty: God is the Love of all Loves

Life is born in the world of Beauty and Loveliness, of instant change and movement, of spontaneous phenomena and pure sensations. Life is an organism with instinctive interests and it conceives of the world in which it lives as knowledge dawns upon it by growing consciousness and as its instinctive interests develop into an intelligent ideal. The world we see around us is the Ideal world of our ever-growing

interests; we perceive of what we are bold enough to conceive and we behold what we are prepared to let be before us. Hence all knowledge implies a desire to know; the Ideal is the Art and Invention of our Attitude and the world is what *discover* to ourselves. This phenomenal world becomes discrete and intelligible as our practical interests develop and realise their purposes more and more. But the very basis of our purposes and practical ends is the hope of their possible fulfilment and the attention we give ourselves to see them so fulfilled. The child clings to the mother's breast with instinctive interests, with clinging hands and legs and crying mouth. It knows no language but a cry and it is in truth one embodied cry for our love and call for our help. The Genius of Life is the child of liberty whose cry calls forth the most liberal and affectionate love from the bosom of the Eternal. As the child plays upon the mother's breast, even so the Spirit of life plays upon the bosom of Nature, only because life is born of the inmost heart and soul of Nature and life fulfils with the help of Nature what she is seeking throughout the ever-growing time. Nature's love is centred upon life and life by its divine promptings calls forth the divinity immanent in Nature.

To love God by the measure of God requires the evolution of the Whole and All, the growth of everything good, the active employment of all activity, the

building of the boundless temple of Space, the lighting of the million million lamps of stars and the outpouring oil and tears of the infinite hearts of all things mixed in one joyous prayer and adoration. The growth of divine love requires of us all loves loved by us, the loving services rendered by us, the dreams of love dreamt by us and the ideals attitudinised by us. The God of Infinite Loves grows out of the experience of the infinite species and varieties of living beings throughout ever-growing time. God is the eternity realised in the full intensity, potentiality and possibility of every moment and to the full and maximum effect of all effort. God is the unending and ever-growing evolution of Godliness, the manifestation of Divine Beauty in manifold shapes, the experience of Divine Joy in infinite varieties, the exercise of Divine Liberty in the creation of more and more subjects and objects of love. God is Activity through and through and God is Love out and out.

Sri Krishna's God is the Heart-God of Humanity

It is this perfectly human faith in a Living God worshipped by our loves and joys, tears and sorrows, it is this healthy religion of the holiest simplicity that has had the sanction and support of Sri Krishna. The God of Love who transmutes all hate into love, all darkness into light, all obstacles into opportunities

for more of development, is not the God who is on the side of light and strength alone, is not an Almighty who lives to establish His supremacy, is not an orthodox hater of apparent and conventional evils, is not merely the friend of the successful, the supporter of the already strong and the bestower of gifts only to those who are able to make the loudest and the most fashionable requests. The God of Humanity is the Heart-God whose throne is the living, throbbing hearts of all mankind, is the Humble Servant of all those who labour in the true service of some other living heart, the Happy Friend of every honest soul that seeks a good companion, the Beloved Spouse of every wooing heart, the Darling Child of all dearest affections, the Heavenly Delight of all divine hopes and aspirations. God lives with us in our daily life and He is the breath of our breath; God loves us more than we could ever hope to love ourselves, He is our whole consciousness, activity and existence. God does not kill us when we die, natural death is no killing, natural death is not the destruction we suppose it to be and there is no sin in death which comes of mature age.

Premature deaths, plagues of every kind and bodily miseries are the results of our social evils, indifference to our natural surroundings, individual intemperance and indulgence in carnal appetites. The only death is indifference, the only sin is loss of

sensibility, the only slavery is inability to love. Abuses of the self are acts of suicide, excess of craving is the sign of slavish helplessness and prostitution of the bodily and mental powers is the most horrid putrefaction the living life can be subjected to. It is for us to know ourselves as instruments and participants in an eternal process, to restrain and discipline our native passions and appetites and develop our latent forces of good for the good of the whole of which we are the parts and living limbs.

Experience is the End and Aim of Life

Life's salvation lies in the conservation and consecration of all its powers in the service and betterment of the larger life to which it belongs. The sea of life is not independent of the individual streams, waves and ripples; the littlest spray or sparkling drop adds to the whole not merely in proportion to its mass but also in proportion to its completeness of merging. The little drop that has lost itself in the larger ocean revivifies the life of the whole and finds its former self magnified a millionfold when its heart is mingled with the universal one. He who has lived his life in full finds himself eternised in the ideal world of experience. What he has done is his and all his loves and noble dreams shall be his liberation and supreme salvation. Experience is absorption into the Godhead

in the most certain and sacred sense of the term. We are not to concern ourselves with the after use of our cremation ashes but don the bright vesture of life with the deepest faith and divinest love of God—then under the very eye of Heaven in the open daylight we shall behold the seeds of our sowing sprout forth beneath our feet and grow up in height to the Adorable Altar of God. Eternal life is not one of mere extension and invulnerable security. It is not an endless sleep or bliss-enjoyment, a cessation of all activity, a freedom from all care and individual responsibility. Such a dreamless sleep of centuries is the fondest hope of a nightmare victim; such everlasting hibernation broken only with brief periods of bliss-intoxication, such hugging to the soft breast of seductive charm, is neither manly nor moral, neither natural nor human, neither possible nor desirable.

The Nitya-Satya-Saswatha-Dharma-Karma-Sarvaguna-Narayana

The Narayana of the Moving Waters is the Divine Heart of eternal activity whose *Yoganidra* is only another name for the full throbbed contemplative joy that is the inevitable counterpart of all truly creative activity; and this Nidra itself is an activity of the highest pitch which is expressed in symbolic language to represent the Ineffable Joy, the Unbroken Identity

and Inexpressible Fact of the Eternal Individual in whose Universal Heart every individual loses not his individuality but finds himself enlarged infinitefold and becomes one with God's own Blessedness. The God of Love is the Spirit that moves every wave and drop of the infinite Ocean of Existence; is the Nature of Nature that is not a negation of all qualities but their fulsome growth and fulfilment, the Power that brings forth all things in bounteous profusion, speed and facility; the Eternal Presence and Infinite Appearance, the Beauty-God of Evergrowing Loveliness; the Creator, Preserver and *Sustainer* who never destroys but rebuilds the shape and preserves and conserves the essence and substance of all things through increasing experience—Narayana is the Universal Soul and Personality (Purushottama), the Positive God to Whom flow all our lives' progressive experiences from and to, through and through, in and within His Heart! From Heart to Heart, from God to God, move the eternal waters of germinal life and undying existence. God's activity is not a blind restlessness bringing forth no good throughout the rolling ages. God is His own growth of Godliness and this growth is the one thing possible to God alone, the one virtue born of His Potency and the indisputable fact of eternal time and infinite space. God's Godliness is a virtue of everlasting growth without death. God's Beauty changes and mainfests more and more, but never dies. While God is, Godliness

increases; while life lives, experience grows; eternal existence is the groundwork of infinite possibility, and divine growth is not in mass or extension, not in addition or aggregation, but in being the same everlasting sea which preserves its least drop undestroyed and persists in being the universal sea with the imprint and memory of endless ages, with the music and laughter of the infinite foaming waves, with the momentum of every movement moved and with energy not the least impaired.

Futile Arguments against such a Conception of God

There are those who argue that such a God implies an imperfect being who has yet to develop and come to his full growth. If growth of godliness, good and beauty, be signs of imperfection, better such an imperfect God than an impotent Being who is deluded by his own Devil or Maya, better this stripling than a heartless creator who disowns his offspring, better this innocent youth than a faithless lover who is insincere in his professions of love, better this active boy than an idle drone who leaves all the active work to his duteous and devoted wife and sits cross-legged on her shoulders to find fault with her when she stoops to do anything. Better this limited God of liberal motives than the irresponsible Tyrant who could not be approached with any human request and keeps himself concealed from all earthly

experience with treacherous intent to pounce on us at our death and force us to more of earthly imprisonments. The divine magician and astrologer, the arch-priest and holy-threaded one, how easily such a falsely conceived God serves the purpose of a toy and tiresome excuse for all the follies of kings and divines. Such a false God is too worse to be a fanciful human character and such a heavenly being was indeed the creation of a mortal brain that had grown mad with thinking itself too wise to treat of earthly things and drew inspiration for the creation of an eternal conundrum that could earn him immortal fame. The puzzle of the philosophers, the riddle and enigma of the intellectual simpletons, was originally a maggot in an eccentric brain; and the bookworms true to their breeding repeat the joke day after day.

The Whole Universe is the Expression of God and Eternity confirms God's Individuality

The evergrowing experiences of endless ages are God's growing arteries and veins, the flowing currents of the divine life, the feeling pulses of the divine heart and the sensitive nerves of divine intelligence. Both the Noumenal and Phenomenal, the Eternal and the Ephemeral, are the modes of the same Positive, Potential Existence which resolves itself by its own liberty into endless evergrowing activity of

infinite experiences. From Destiny to Divinity, from Existence to Experience, from Liberty to Love—such is the nature of the godly process as we know it. There is no other reason why there should be creation but that the God of Activity finds delight in being the activity of various kinds—it is the spontaneous joy of action, the verve of creation that gives birth to our worlds. The countless worlds of creation are never destroyed though they change in shape and figure, God is ever manifest in some shape of Beauty, God is the eternal creator, engenderer, inspirer and sustainer, to God's all embracing Heart flow the running streams of every movement and experience and God alone is the fulfilment of all our holiest faiths and hopes and heart-satisfying loves.

The Supreme Religion of Sri Krishna is one of Positive Good, Progressive Betterment and Ever continuous Practice

The religion of spontaneous activity and wholesale sacrifice demands the highest character and intelligence to exemplify its truth. It is easier to preach than to teach, easier to teach than to practise truth ; but the hardest of all is to seek Truth, Love and Beauty in the same breath and be practising good with both hands. To stand by the side of good and fight against evil is in itself a moral courage worthy of high admiration ; to work for the rescue of evil

from the coil of its own make is still more noble and honourable; but to look with both eyes centred upon the throbbing heart of growth, to seek the good of body and mind till they both become one in excellence, to seek the greater good by the sacrifice of the little good, to live by the living virtues of life and look upon all life with one heart, one eye, one love and one undying faith in the Eternal and Ever-growing God, this indeed demands for its fulfilment a divine born genius who is not in the least a partisan or seeker of limited purposes, who holds no brief for heaven against the claims of the earth, who advocates no eternal cause in opposition to everyday experience, who hates not the least glorious tasks and insignificant joys of life but transmutes the vulgarest dross into the rarest gold by the touch of his soul-suffusing sympathy. The over-zealous idealists who are intolerant of life's trivialities, the monomaniacs who would have all life cast into the mould of their uniform make, the God-proud, heaven-heavy aristocrats who would never stoop to recognise the commonplaces of everyday life, the seekers of immortality who are bitterly hostile to all mortal concerns, such cranks and bores of single purposes, such partisans of dogmatic doctrines and exclusive methods, though effective in their own way and though good as stimulants and saucy varieties of organisms, are not capable of stable and sustained action and are not in the least strong enough to be charitable of

others' faults, to look difficulties into their face and to be loyal to their heart's love through every changing circumstance. The over-ambitious miners, who would easily exhaust the earth of all its gold, are impatient of the toils of agriculture and industry; the seekers of precious stones and perfumed knowledge, the scholars of the most secret sciences and profound philosophies, often bargain life's living heart for a blood-red stone, often intoxicate themselves with the wine of self-conceit, often allow their heart's blood to clot in frigid aloofness and transform their bodies and souls into glazed clay and gilded traces of godliness, painted and pictured on a fanciful yet no less fragile background and surface. The genius of Sri Krishna was something quite different from that of the exclusivists. To Him there was one growing, varying good throughout the world irrespective of everyman's likes and dislikes, hatreds and prejudices. He was not afraid of being misunderstood when He had some master purpose in His heart. He flouted the conventions of the society when He had to live by the dictates of His conscience. It was not the temporary good nor the promise of immortal good in future that divided His heart's predilections; His attention was always centred upon the immediate and instantaneous duty which demanded His heart's next fulsome throb and He flowed along with the life's current irrespective of all depths and shallows, all sudden falls

and dangers, all circling eddies and sweeping torrents.

Sri Krishna the Supreme Realist

Sri Krishna is the supreme realist whom the future world will come to recognise and offer worship more and more. Sri Krishna is the Soul of Humanity that has its roots deep inside the earth, that grows like plants and lives upon the products of the plants, that is bound to the earth by ties of every kind and thinks of the earth as the divine mother and goddess. The earth-goddess should be our first object of worship; to the earthly hills and dales, to the earth-flowing rivers and plains, should go forth our best affection. If gifts are worthy of gratitude, who deserves more grateful recognition than this living planet, this expansive earth, this soil, seed-bed and feeding mother of plenty. Worship of the earth implies reverence for things around us, gentleness and sympathy, kindly tolerance of all life; to live and let live is the only true worship and highest religion of living humanity. The Cowherd who tended the flocks of Vraja with the gentlest possible care, the Boy who worshipped the Govardhana hill that supplied plenty of green pasturage to His dear cows and calves, His heart was one with the loves and joys, tears and sorrows, of all living things. He danced and played and sang with all singing, running,

playing, living beings and His genius flowered from the very dust and soil of the earth. To the earth He looked to the end of His life with the full assurance of an unimpeachable conscience and with the sublime certainty of His inborn divinity. His throbbing heart swelled heaven-high yet its blood poured the faster and richer towards the very same earth. He fought many battles, thought out many ideals and laboured in manifold ways with His attention always centred on earth. Was He the less divine for that? Was He the less of a genius, less of a poet, prophet or philosopher for such grasp of the earthly details? Did He love God the less because of this earth-orientation on His part? Was it to His discredit that He loved all mankind as children of the very same mother? Surely none but such a child of the earth could deserve worship as the Eternal and Evergrowing Child who lives on our affections, who grows on our good deeds and grows the godlier, lovelier and younger, for more of the truly earthly loves we grow from our hearts. This Child of Humanity has the green colour and freshness of the many lives that have yet to grow, the fragrance of all flowers that blossom on earth's surface, the beauty born of all earthly glories and happiest human affections. It is this child of the earth who is the humanliest of all men and the divinest divine of all Gods—it is He who symbolises in His person the evergrowing heart and soul of humanity.

The Secret of Sri Krishna's Supremacy

What is the secret of so tremendous an influence that Sri Krishna has possessed over a large portion of mankind for the past so many centuries? What is the still more mysterious charm that even to-day fifty centuries after His death the magic power of His words and doings, the novelty of attraction felt for His person and character, the commanding adoration for His genius, is not only not undiminished but has grown the highest of all the previous centuries and is growing still higher day by day? The charm of Sri Krishna's personality is due to the truth and reality of all His actions, ideals, enterprises and even His failings. Be it said first that Sri Krishna had had His failures and that is the very reason why His successes are worthy of imitation. Though poetry and magic, tradition and legend have built a regular castle of cobwebs with the most puzzling intricacy of workmanship, beauty of design and strength of persistence round His great name and person, the splendour of these shining gauze is because of the light of reality shed by His refulgent Personality. Nothing is more profound and miraculous in human experience than a man's personality. If a man possesses anything of the ineffable glory of God it manifests itself in the power and charm of his personality. What we mean by personality is the spiritual whole and the evergrowing, expansive

genius that while retaining the essential unity and integrity of conscience and character responds to every suggestion of beauty and betterment, has its heart always open to the unseen and unexpected elements of ever-increasing experience, is always eager to discover the hidden charms and fragrances, the subtle colours and tastes, the deep-lying pearls and gems of the Divine God of Truth, Love and Beauty. The word personality is really indefinable and it is of the very essence of personality to be the indefinable yet no less definite fact of experience, the ineffable yet no less distinguishing feature of human life, the spiritual yet no less substantial element of all success and enduring fame.

Sri Krishna's All-Pervading Personality

Sri Krishna's personality is of such divine magnetism and superhuman magnitude, of such ethereal and all-pervading essence, that the name Krishna has come to mean all that is noble and beautiful in life and conduct, in creative and conceptive power, in character and conscience. The personality of Sri Krishna permeates through and through the soil of India. There is no ceremony, no holiday or festival, no sacred institution or observance, which does not remind the millions of human hearts of the divine example of the All-feeling-Heart who once lived and worked amongst them for their

common good. All girls are given in marriage in Krishna's name, all noble services are rendered to merit His divine favour, all children are looked upon as His own images and all lovers as His own disguises; the chaste and the pure chant His eternal praise, the witty and the wise cite His immortal sayings and doings, the learned expound His teachings from generation to generation, from age to age; both the rich and poor, both the young and old, the ambitious and the humble, the cunning and the simple, the conservative and the liberal, the most orthodox and heterodox, all acclaim Him with one heart, greet Him with one voice and own Him as their chosen leader and guide. Sri Krishna lives in the history of every National Movement, in the calendar of every man's growing life, in the secret vows and prayers of the most loving mothers, sisters, wives and daughters; He lives in the pulse of every noble feeling and in the example of every heroic action. India is Krishna-coloured, Krishna-stuffed and Krishna-perfumed. What most she requires is the original impulse to action and movement, the impelling energy of the heart where alone the Divine Charioteer lives and moves and wherefrom alone He guides all life. Let India awaken to the eternal call of action, let her face the ordeals of life with a brave heart and with a willingness to follow the footsteps of the Divine Guide and let her thus earn everyday victory for the cause of eternal righteousness.

Sri Krishna is Truly the Divine Guide and the Embodiment of All Good and Beauty

Beauty is the bodying forth and the *becoming,* the bursting splendour and burning fire of God's own Godliness, while good is the body itself, the golden heart and core, the real mass and substance, the essence and entity of God that is God throughout. Good is the gold, beauty is its brilliance; good is the nugget, beauty is the lustre that makes the very sands look like real gold; good is the quantity of quality, while beauty is the quality of quality that becomes a quantity by being more and more of the very same quality. Beauty is the Apparent and Evident sign of God's reality and substance. Beauty bespeaks God's Heart of Good. There is a grain of good howsoever small in all things beautiful even as the ethereal oils and fragrances are present in the leaves and roots of some herbs. Good is the collective and cumulative beauty, the creative and consecrative beauty, the permanent and progressive beauty. There is no beauty without good and no good without beauty.

Beauty and good are both creative and not merely selective. Good is not the mere possession of gold nor its mining and minting; good transmutes into its gold whatever it touches with its life-giving lips. So too beauty is not a garment nor an affected blush nor is it the mere presence or absence of materials

affecting the eye and taste with varying dispositions. Beauty is the open countenance and colour that colours life throughout; it is the purpleness of the blood that sustains life throughout, though varying elements enter into its composition and disturb its current. Beauty is the unfading blush that pales not before the sight of evil and ugliness but blushes the more and pours out its best elements to recover the poisoned life from death. Sri Krishna was beautiful with the beauty of all burning love whose fire consumed all smoke and ugliness, all evil taints and impurities, all inappeasable jealousies and inveterate hatreds. The humblest outcastes and the most degraded of sinners were won back to life and beauty by the burning contact of his godly heart. He abhored not any one, eschewed not any society nor kept himself aloof from evil for fear of contagious contact. The incorrigible evil was simply burned by His warm breath and the devil himself danced in obedience to His will.

There is a suggestion in every shape, an element of beauty in every individual body, a look or laugh of hidden appeal, an unseen trace of potential attraction, which becomes revealed to us only when we come into contact with the living heart. The magic power of love and sympathy lies in revealing to us the many shades of goodness and beauty unfelt before; the body and object was there already but the beauty is revealed only when we look through its

consecrated heart. No heart is insincere unto itself and none so selfish as not to sacrifice its blood for the service of other living limbs and members. Living bodies are always beautiful and make themselves so by the right use of their life to some other living heart. Oh for a living hand and body to help us in the hour of need and comfort us during the agony of excruciating ills! Oh for a living heart to speak to us, a living bosom to embrace us when we are left desolate and uncared for, despised and outcasted! The face is beautiful that loves us, the voice is musical that speaks to us gently and enquires of our health and happiness; the smile on our beloved's lips is language beyond expression and the kiss that is ours by gift of love and godliness of affection—divinity is that kiss in fact and deed, in strength and sweetness, in inspiration and overpowering influence!

Beauty is consecrated by experience and the godliness of beauty is the hallowing light and glory that centres round some beloved face or form which reveals to our eyes through contact of its own body the Body of the Unseen God, which tempts us by the suggestion of its own goodness to image the Eternal after its own shape, which elevates our imagination and deepens our insight to construct the Living Picture and Visible Form of the Adorable Loveliness who lives in the heart of all things. Sri Krishna has come to be worshipped as the very embodiment and real representative of the Eternal God

because His living heart was full of the eternal love and His living limbs wrought in the service of mankind. His face is the one remembered through endless time because it is the face that has kissed and has been kissed by all men and women and children. The forlorn wife and the sorrow stricken mother, the weeping sister and the widowed daughter, look to the Divine Child, Krishna, for consolation and help and life's abiding satisfaction; and Sri Krishna's ever smiling image and unfailing touch of godliness brightens the darkest life with the flood of rising hope and sunlight. Sages and saints in their hours of spiritual despair have called on the sweet name of Krishna and found solace in the remembrance of His life and doings, have had new life brought to their thirsting lips, new energy and inspiration, as they listened in silence to the all subduing music of His eternal voice. The hunchbacked maiden of unprepossessing features had yet the heart to fall in love with Sri Krishna and to him was reserved her choicest viands, desserts and delicacies. To meet Him alone on the path she had walked many miles and waited many days. During the course of waiting she was led to doubt whether He, the adored of the fairest in the land, would stoop to look at her ugly face—yet fair was she in the sight of the Lord! She, who sought but a kiss at so much cost, who gave her life's all for one light touch of His lips, her He embraced in the fulness of all sisterly, brotherly,

wifely, husbandly affection and blessed her body with a new garb of beauty by the touch of His divine love and joy !

Sri Krishna's Personal Habits

The majestic power and beauty of Sri Krishna's personality is known as well in His cordial relations with His many friends of both sexes as in His happy home life, His personal habits and individual tastes. Never was He studiedly simple in His dress, reserved in His manners and pompous in His expressions. Geniality of human gentleness, the glow of godly kindliness, the light of serene joy was always on His face and His body was garbed with the brightest elements of elegance and esthetic adornment. The conventional saint who struts in public in the vulgar style of savage nudity, the haughty sage with his pride hanging heavily to the uttermost threads of his torn and dirty rags, the cheap notoriety of affected poverty, the sentimental show of beggarliness, was foreign to His blood and repulsive to His taste. Sri Krishna loved this beautiful earth of evergreen leaves and flowers and He revered her none the less for her sterner features and severer aridities. To drink from the cup of joy with affected half-mouth, to deny His body the full blossoming apparel of brilliant colours, to refuse the heart its fulsome throbs, was an act of hypocrisy and unlawful restraint which He condemned

the most out of regard for the natural healthiness of life and the naïve joy we feel in supplying life's elemental wants. There was no pose about Sri Krishna and least of all was He disposed to be a vanity—victimised philosopher in rags who always brags about the inanity of all human loves and joys. Such a pride need not even pay for the cost of a clothing, such a philosophy needs no sound education and such an attitude is the easiest one to be assumed by the worst of scheming scoundrels and villainous worldlings.

His Home-Life with Queens Rugmini and Satyabhama

The ideal-fond youth dreaming of all possible kinds of ennobling loves had grown into the heroic husband of a renowned princess who sought *His* hand in defiance of her family people's wishes. The only fact of Rugmini's romantic marriage is enough to immortalise a hero in the annals of a country's history. The noble adventure of the youthful king Krishna is as well noteworthy of the estimation in which He was held by the proudest princesses in the land as of His noble and dauntless championship of the women's cause which alone won Him the heart of the royal partner of His real marriage. Sri Krishna's married life was one of continual bliss and strict monogamy till His second marriage with Satyabhama which He

was induced to celebrate partly for reasons of state and partly out of engrossing love for a new object of superb beauty. The marriage with Satyabhama aggrieved none, as Rugmini was always assured of her foremost place in her lord's heart. This is not meant to defend a distinct falling down of the conjugal ideal from that of Sri Rama and Sita. But the transcendent and truly divine qualities of Sita were far beyond the reach of such a queen as Rugmini. Sita's sublime character and supernatural charms transfixed Rama's heart to hers by the sheer force of interpenetrative beauty. Truth to speak, Rama deserved not such a divine wife as Sita and the disparity of matching was manifest even in the next Avatar with a change of emphasis on the husband's side. Rugmini was not anything less than a model wife as the world goes; but her husband's heart was such an ocean of social sensibilities and evergrowing love that the utmost she could do was only to swim and float on its rising waves with the buoyancy of self-elated love. Satyabhama was both the complement and supplement of her conjugal sister. While Rugmini was of the best classic and idealistic type, chaste, sedate and submissive to her husband's will, Satyabhama was a shrewd and ambitious maiden of the rich middle class, conscious of her exalted position and personal charms, of a provoking temperament and restless habits, of romantic determination to follow her husband through

the worst perils of the inevitable wars and not reluctant when occasion demanded it even to take up arms and fight with dauntless valour in the place of her wounded warrior-lord. The rising sun of Krishna's youth was wedded to the rosy dawn of Rugmini, to the rescue of whose ethereal car of glory he sped with all possible alacrity and mixed her melting beauty with his own engrossing splendour; but ere his life's sun sped down the meridian the spotless cloud of Satyabhama's person haunted his heart and soul, followed step by step his descending flight, hung about his person as his own beauteous apparel or victorious plume, sat on the chariot of his lap and rode with him in resplendent glory—till at last all was one radiant sea and burning sky of gold, all the three mingled in one melting stream of love and found themselves each in the other and all in all.

His Holy Friendship with Empress Draupadi

The most glorious garter of sacred fellowship was woven round the heart of Krishna by the golden hand of Draupadi. If there was one heart that could match with Krishna's in its passionate intensity and fervour of affection, if there was one womanly soul who did challenge admiration from the most gifted genius amongst men, if noble ambition and exalted desire ever took shape in the form of a princess and provoked the heart of her admirers to

the noblest deeds of chivalry and generosity, if ever in the history of the world two hearts of different sexes loved each other with the perfect purity of heart and body and the fair partner of that love was the object of holiest adoration, then that adored object and illustrious princess, that pure soul and passionate heart was Draupadi. Born of the purplest blood of Panchala kings, the only daughter of her imperial father, possessed of all the best qualities of the noble Kshatriya race, a princess who was the very embodiment of all royal pride and assertion, an accomplished lady who was bold enough to laugh openly at the follies of her royal brothers and cousins, a defiant queen who always carried herself in the full dignity of her sex and flouted the flagitious Kauravas to their face in the assembled crowd of kings, nobles and priests, the ill-treated heroine whose avengement resulted in the greatest war of all Indian History, the Pandava Queen was a Passion-Incarnate Goddess whose all radiant and all consuming heart of fire was never felt in its full intensity and strength by any one except Sri Krishna. To Him, the Lord, did open her heart in the full freedom of confidence and conscientious details, to Him flowed the molten torrents of her volcanic passions even as the lava flows into the sea. The regnant lord of Dwaraka was Draupadi's dearest brother bound by the holiest ties of spiritual affection. Sri Krishna was her confidant and confessor of the most sacred type and to Him

was revealed the dazzling reality of her divine yearnings, the tragic reality of her honour dishonoured, the intensest reality of her unquenchable indignation and the pathetic reality of her frustrated ambitions. The proudest woman of all Bharatavarsha both by birth and marriage, the most celebrated beauty of her own times, the majestic Queen who held in her palm the obedient hearts of the all-victorious and ever invincible Pandava heroes, what sufferings was she not subjected to, what ignominy and insult, what inhuman torture was she spared from? And yet what vows of vengeance did she not dare to vow to the very face of her enemies even in the darkest hours of her downfall. To behold her bathing in the blood of her deadliest foes of honour, to see her triumphing over truculence in tragic pride, to see Draupadi crowned at last with diadem as the Empress-Spouse of the Sovereign Lord of all Bharatavarsha, to behold the beautiful queen restored to her pristine splendour with increased power and dignity—joy was it for Sri Krishna to see her smile at last that sublime smile of hers which seemed to conceal the many deep gashes and incurable wounds of her ever bleeding heart. Draupadi was one of the few women who are free from *pettiness*. Even divine Sita was a victim to this trait of her sex and condemned the most loyal Lakshmana on the basis of a silly suspicion. Draupadi was a votary of unbounded ambitions throughout her life. She was

the flower of the Kshatriya Culture which was soon to die thoughout the land and found life long afterwards in the romantic land of Rajasthan. She was the prototype of the long and illustrious line of Rajaputani Queens who have earned immortal names in the history of our country by their incomparable deeds of heroïsm and valour and by their unsurpassed nobility of sentiment and conduct. Sri Krishna's love of Draupadi was akin to adoration and none deserved the homage of the highest man on earth than this veritable daughter of the mother earth. She was intensely real and concrete in her words, deeds and emotions, surpassingly sincere in her professions and attachments, passionate to the extreme, proud to a fault; and of nothing was she more legitimately prond than her most honourable and holy friendship with the Divine Lord Sri Krishna.

The Glorious Conquest of Sri Krishna's Realism over Sage Kuchela's Idealism

The Brahmin sage, Kuchela, was a genius avowed to lofty ideals from his very childhood. Krishna and Kuchela were schoolmates and chums in their happy days of discipleship and many an hour of youthful communion, ardent discussion and heartfelt conversation had they had between them in the house of their revered sage and preceptor, Rishi Sandipa. Kuchela

always championed the impossible and abstract ideals of life and conduct, while Krishna without rejecting their grandeur of conception strove hard to convince his friend about the need for more substantial basis of human experience and earthly possibilities ere such glorious edifices were raised to the height of heaven with real bricks and mortar. Kuchela took the vow of poverty in order to practise to the very letter the ideal duties of a Brahmin householder and he had the good fortune to have for his wife a Brahmin maiden, the best representative of her type. Krishna had often exhorted him to devote his heaven-bestowed genius on more practical lines and with greater regard to his natural wants and cravings. Kuchela would not heed nor would he shirk the legitimate functions of family life with all the difficulties it involves in the absence of sufficient economic means. He lived a life of austere and unmitigated poverty while his noble wife suffered with him the tortures of unredeemed hunger. He would daily beg in the streets peopled with inhabitants not very much better than himself in worldly means and what he acquired thereby was used for that day's purpose by himself and his truly devoted spouse.

This noble lady of ravishing charms and saintly countenance, this model of an affectionate human heart that veritably fed its appetites on the spiritual food of love and respect alone, this cultured wife

who was conscious of her husband's genius and his godly aspirations, this life-long friend and bedmate of his who soothed his sorrows, assuaged his pains, brightened his hopes and fed his thirsting lips with the burning kisses of her holiest love, this living spirit of sanctity and sacrificial fire, this Goddess of self-surrender, the daughter of Dakshayani's divinest family of women, this emblem of India's eternal wifehood and motherhood, this godliest flower of spiritual civilisation, was always under the silent observation of Sri Krishna and she was always the object of His most hallowed respect and silent worship. The living soul of Kuchela was his wife; the concrete shape of his ideals, the practical embodiment of his theories was she, his beloved, uncomplaining, heart-sustaining, ever smiling and ever encouraging life-mate whose body spent itself in the service of his body and took in return his best consecrated and unsubstantial parts. She fed him with what he was able to earn by an hour's begging in the streets and fed her own heart to sumptuousness by *seeing* him eat with taste and hearty relish; her smiles were the best sauces to his appetite and ever she looked on in admiration at the giant intellect of her husband that renounced with one deliberate will all worldly profits and favours of kings, all crooked means of earning wealth and fame, and chose to live that life of silent bliss in her sole company by delivering his life's burden into her hands.

Indescribable were the pangs of elemental hunger which she had to undergo; yet she bore it in her days of youth because of her ability to stand it and because of the fear of breaking her husband's honourable resolve. But when children were born to them, when they had to live the larger life of race-functions and cater to the needs of growing organisms and crying mouths, when the existence of the race-tree was threatened, then was hunger recognised as a common enemy and then the need for some tangible means of existing and substantial ways of living suggested itself to the heart of the groaning mother and loving wife. She shuddered at the thought of becoming her godly husband's worldly detractor, a vile tempter and seducer; she staggered at the prospect of saving the body at the expense of the soul and often she swooned in sheer perplexity and helplessness of mind and body when the wolf stared at her face day after day and threatened to devour her darling children one and all. Her dearest lord, her dearest children borne to him out of heavenly union, her godly husband, her heart-born children, how was she to maintain them all with the very little that her husband was able to bring and which the same little was growing less and less while the family grew larger and larger.

The family life of Kuchela lends itself to much mawkish tears from the eyes of the modern audience whose overfed stomachs and unscrupulous methods

of earning wealth have not the least natural likeness to the struggles and sorrows of the Sage's experience. The wife of Kuchela was not wanting in shrewdness or talents for acquiring things *as gifts* which is so much in evidence amongst the clever women of to-day ; only she, the chaste wife, the true Sati avowed to her husband's cause with the holiness of single-heartedness, did never sour the pure milk of his spirituality by her pernicious, underhand schemes of acquisition and persistent desire to grasp at some tangible things. It was not want of intelligence that enabled the genius's wife to undergo the horrors of hunger which is natural to all ; it was not fear of his anger nor want of faith in his powers ; not an inevitable acquiescence but voluntary co-operation in his living the plain and noble life of high thinking, it was spontaneous admiration for his impossible ideals, it was the buoyancy of her youthful genius which was wedded to that of his : theirs was a marriage of body, heart and soul, theirs was a union of complete merging, a coalescence of eternal coexistence, a creative co-mingling and spiritual synthesis, that in the process of combination sublimated the grosser parts with the same divine heat of aspiration.

This ideal wife and mother was worshipped by the most worshipful heart of Sri Krishna. Often had he unobserved by herself seen her about her humble cottage with her many children clinging to her person with their inevitable and importunate cries,

the children who looked the veritable images of starvation and moving anatomies. The starving mother of those spectral children had on her face the noblest lineaments of a withered beauty whose blossom had once stood unfaded the severest drought of many a starving day for years together. The poor and tattered rags in which she was clothed in contrast to the still radiant colour of her bodily frame—oh most pathetic was that smile that would fain be a smile on her shrunken lips when she took the youngest and the most importunate child to her breast and washed its face with tears, which tears were the last drops of living blood. Such sights had imprinted on the mind of the Lord with the force of harrowing admiration and outbursting pity; and fain would the Lord have run to the rescue of that noble family, fain would He have acted the part of the good uncle and benevolent brother, had He not apprehended the holy anger of Kuchela towards all those who tried to dissuade him from his cherished vow of poverty and purity from worldly taint.

The avowed householder-ascetic was not to be converted by words and dialectics. The profound master of metaphysics and advocate of first principles had arguments enough to puzzle the wisdom of all gods and wise men. It was his noble wife who conquered Kuchela in the end and the weapon of ultimate victory was the plain and simple love of a wife who had become the mother of many children.

Her motherly heart could never see her children starve before her sight. Kuchela's wife knew the friendship between her godly husband and the glorious Lord of Dwaraka, the all wise, all generous king. She had heard wonderful reports about Sri Krishna's kindness and generosity, particularly to all women and children. Had she seen the glorious Lord of Guzerat in person she would have fallen at His feet as at an elder brother's and importuned Him to disregard her husband's friendly threats and admonitions. It was no shame for Kuchela to be the honoured guest of such a sincere and worthy friend and it was not in the least dishonest or dishonourable to exchange presents between two such comrades of equal age and attainments. Kuchela succumbed at last to the argument of love and was moved to tears by the refrain of motherly pity which she interposed between every two sentences.

The day of deliverance came at last with the visit of Kuchela to Dwaraka. The hearty and honourable reception he received at the hands of the puissant Lord of wealthy Guzerat, the distinguished privileges of seat and status he was accorded by the Spouse of Universal Prosperity, the most exalted honour of his being attended to by Queen Rugmini in person, were royal rewards and social recognition enough to satisfy the most ambitious genius who thirsts for recognition after years of laborious devotion to his consecrated tasks. Kuchela like the true man of

genius forgot everything else in the ecstasy of instant recognition and immediate fame. The most dazzling sights of material splendour that met him suddenly at the streets and palaces of Dwaraka, the sudden revelation of the highest attainable worldly prosperity and beauty of bodily life, the immense treasures and variegated pleasures possible within the reach of man by the direction of his brain and energy to proper material ends, the glory of material civilisation directed and developed by the divine genius of Sri Krishna opened the eyes of Kuchela to new dreams of supreme conquest and revived in his heart the native ambitions of the aggressive, acquisitive self which was till then dormant, not for want of strength and impulse but for want of something grandiose and magnificent to work upon. The highest worldly success has in it as much of attraction to the man of genius as the holiest sanctity of saintly fame. Kuchela having attained the latter was seriously thinking whether or not he could *then* follow the divine example of Krishna in mastering both worlds of matter and spirit.

In such vivid dreams and ecstatic visions he passed his hours of stay in Dwaraka and forgot everything about his mission to Krishna except the humble gift of his wife to his royal and resplendent friend. The forlorn bundle of *beaten rice* wrapped in the tattered rags that had once covered the godly honour of Kuchela's wife and had heard in sooth the most sacred whisperings of her devoted heart as it hung loose over

her breast, that rag of humblest cotton was to Krishna more costly than his most purple regal robe—it was to him a piece of her very living heart, her message of honour and appeal for help imprinted with her warmest tears and heaving sobs. To Him, the Lord of all loves, nothing appealed more than this cry of silent appeal from the godly wife of His most affectionate and ingenuous friend; the Lord of all wealth, power and dignity, nothing could make Him beg for more, from none would He deign to beg, no one's feet was more sacred to fall down to, from no one's hand would He supplicate a gift as from the hand of her, the embodiment of all true chastity and conjugal love, the ideal wife of the most honoured idealist known to the full knowledge of the Divine Avatar.

In the whole history of India there has been but a single example of the true Brahminic ideal of genius avowed to stern and severe poverty, of idealism pledged to incorruptible unworldliness, in the very exact and excruciating sense of those terms, while at the same time trying to fulfil all the rigid exclusions and categorical imperatives as are insisted upon by the immemorial ideal of a true knower of Brahman and possessor of supreme knowledge. Kuchela stands alone in the annals of Brahminical doings for his singular purity of profession, spotless sincerity of convictions and undaunted adherence to the impossible ideal of elemental poverty self-chosen and self-sought in scorn of consequence, regardless of all scope for his genius

to earn immediate fame and fortune, heedless of all temptations, and despising all royal favours, court intrigues, administrative policies, priestly perquisites, presents of cows and corn and gifts of gold, that gladden the hearts of even the most professed ascetics and earn their sage benedictions and saintly blessings to their liberal donors. But even Kuchela's success so far was due to the self-sacrifice and untiring service of his goddess wife from whose blood was drawn the nectar of his spiritual enjoyment and heart-sustaining power. While men like Kuchela are very few, devout wives like Kuchela's, the uncomplaining angels of silent service and joyous self-abnegation, are still living in many an Indian home thanks to the genius of the soil that has given birth and is still giving birth to more godly women and domestic divinities than to great heroes and men of supreme action. In the divine war of Ideals between Sri Krishna and the Brahmin Sage, Sri Krishna defeated Kuchela on his own ground through the natural diplomacy and divine arguments of the Lord's holiest ambassadress and truest executress of life's true theory and practice, namely, the noble and loving wife of the sage who won over her husband the victory for his divine and eternal friend.

Sri Krishna's Ennobling Attitude of Chivalry towards All Women

Lord Sri Krishna was always alive to the noble side of Womanhood and He was never tired of

praising the virtues of His sisters. He freely mingled with all women irrespective of their age, attainments or status and to Him was revealed the eternal truth and poetry of human life, the romance of every living family, the spiritual history and sacred whisperings of genuine human experiences woven with the variegated warp and woof of joys and sorrows. In those days of universal decadence, luxury and voluptuousness, in those times of cynical contempt and studied abhorrence of the weaker sex, in those infamous days of Draupadi's dishonourment and diabolical disrobing in public when all men with a few exceptions looked upon women as mere machines for lust-gratification, there stood the Lord the Soul of Honour and Chivalry, the Champion of Love and Chastity, the Warrior against all deadly sins and the Wielder of Discus that protected the weak and pure and shot it irresistible darts into the heart of every scheming tyrant. Perhaps it might be asked whether the love of beautiful girls and grown up maidens could be the pure sentiment unmixed with gallantry. Is that the reason why men fight shy of them in public and prostitute them behind the screen ? Oh God ! Would it ever possible to induce men to make their hearts and minds more attractive to women than to attempt to seduce them with gifts of scents and flowers, dresses and ornaments. Humbugs that we are, we have not the courage to address a woman boldly to her face and treat her with becoming respect. Better

gallantry than heartless indifference outside and incestuous prostitution inside. In a world of lunatics one is only too liable to talk loud and rave. Better the madness of love than the madness of lust, better passionate professions of purity than prurient suspicions against chastity, better to brave the storms or be burned alive by the blazing fire than to rot in stagnation or die of asphyxiation. Sri Krishna loved women with all His heart and loved them for their beauty, charms and graces. He loved their virtues, admired their patience and adored their exalted sense of duty and devotion. If such are not to be loved, who else are worthy of such honour? What is the use of heart and intelligence, soul and sensibility, why are we made susceptible of women's charms but to admire and exalt, to elevate and ennoble our truly lovable mothers, sisters, wives and daughters.

Sri Krishna's Faith in Woman as the Saviour of Man

Give up the cant of sexual evil and sanctify your heart by one sacred resolve to love all womankind. Love women, love them, and do not look upon them as mere machines for lust. You may begin to love as a gallant ready to woo all maidens or you may choose to love as a brother or father, you may imagine yourself to be a demi-God born to succour

experience and He sought not an after heaven as a reward for His labours on earth ; His heart was itself the highest heaven and eternity was not to Him the audacious extension of extravagant and irresponsible hopes but the immediate fulfilling of every moment's duty, the feeling full every surging heart-throb and loving full all those we are privileged to love and serve.

The Lord's was the Life of Truth

Truth is the liberty of experience, the liberty to live ourselves in the fulness of all possibility and in the richness of all reality. The life of truth is the emphatic and integral activity of the heart that puts not any appearance which is other than its own throb and blood, that conceals not, compromises not, hates not the most inimical poison, but assimilates it. The life of truth is not aware of any other existence but the Eternal and Universal, it is loyal throughout to the call of liberty, is obedient out and out to the command of love, it beholds the light of God through day and night and dares to behold the life of all things by merging itself wholesale and all in the sea of evergrowing experience. None dared more than Sri Krishna to live the life of truth and all harmonious development. Krishna has come to mean the divine conscience in man because the life of Sri Krishna was one of consecrated loyalty to the truth of conscience. In all

and save all women—but love them first and foremost and love leads you to purify your passions, modify your methods, chasten your desires and cherish them more and more as part and parcel of yourself. Hail! Thou Woman! My sacred sister and dearest beloved, O thou born to beautify this brute world of immovable fact, thou genius of growth and goddess of plenty, inspirer of ideals and fashioner of fashions, thou art welcome to my heart's sanctuary at any hour of day or night for thou art the true saint who tempts out all temptations and gives strength and courage to the pure heart, thou art to lead us out of our ways of evil by robbing the devil of all its attractiveness, thou art to teach us the simple ways of love, truth and beauty and thou alone art the divine saviour of man!

The Lord's Enthusiasm for Humanity

One sublime enthusiasm for humanity filled the bosom of the Lord throughout His lifetime. To Him the men and women of this world were neither the extravagant Gods nor the irredeemable sinners some religionists make them out to be, but were his born brothers and sisters, simple human beings clothed in flesh and blood, dressed in the armoury of feeling nerves and senses, and stuffed full with various kinds of ambitions and with the holiest fragrant dust of love. To Sri Krishna there was nothing diviner than

His movements with men and women He was aware of the divine light that is witness to the good or evil harboured in the heart. He read through shams and appearances and was past master in exposing the frailties of the human mind. The fears of the brave and the follies of the wise, the vices of the virtuous and the meannesses of the rich, the ugly spots of overweening beauty and the evil tendencies of established institutions for good, were as much under his quick observation and criticism as He was able to discover and bring to prominence the soul of good in things evil.

His Sense of Humour

Most of the popular stories about Krishna's life and doings are brimful of a buoyant humour and practical sagacity. The innumerable anecdotes and traditions connected with His name bear witness to His supreme wisdom, His elemental sanity, holy simplicity, and essential grasp of the healthy side of things. His humour is not a less predominant characteristic of His genius than even His philosophic brilliance or poetic intuition. Humour is human nature that easily recognises itself. It is human joy in the widest commonalty spread. We feel ourselves more akin to our greatest men and women when we come to know they had a heart to laugh with their fellow beings, had the humility to laugh at the follies of

lesser men and be laughed at in return for their own small slips and errors. We learn more by humility than by assumption ; we offend less and rectify more by humorous caricature than by solemn condemnation. Humour is original nature that detects the habitual and liberates life from the monotomy of the same repeated experience however rich and sweet scented by mixing it with the flavour of the earth. It is the absolute mood of good sense and godliness that tolerates all other moods and lives itself in the liberty of all movements. Humour is the subtlest of all our talents, the most sensible of our sense-born faculties, the just balance of mind that, keeping a light but no less constant touch on the essential heart and centre, is free to move and free to judge the value and worth of things from all standpoints.

This sure sign of sanity and balance adds only more strength to Sri Krishna's profound teachings and this hallmark of humanity is what distinguishes Him from many other great religious leaders of the world. Buddha renounced His beautiful wife and baby son, scorned the palace and princely state which was His by birthright, sought refuge in poverty as the best preparation for a holy life and continued to be a beggar even after His hour of illumination. Jesus Christ for all His sublime love of man and God treated His mother with an aloofness of feeling which seems to sanction ascetic repugnance

to the cordial recognition of natural human relations. Asceticism is the curse of all the great religions of the world except perhaps Muhammadanism. The pragmatic Prophet of Arabia had too much of the healthy blood surging in His veins to submit to such a squeaking view of life. The Prophet of the howling deserts has proved Himself more healthy and human than most of the other leaders born in the fertile plains and valleys. Hinduism of the present day is the hot-bed of all vices and corruptions, not the least of which is the unhealthy preference and hypocritical homage given to ascetic views and ideals by all schools of thought and belief.

The Vaishnavism of Sri Krishna and Vyasa

The true Vaishnavism of Sri Krishna and Vyasa is the happy mixture of all the best elements of beauty, good and truth, where each element is enabled to develop the more readily the more there is of the other elements. Not senseless pessimism nor superficial optimism, not blind denial nor arrogant assumption, the core of the Eternal Religion is increasing love of God and man, reliance on human experience, and resolution to bring forth the fullest possible growth of each and all in the equal opportunity and freedom to develop as each could best. The only discipline Sri Krishna knows is *the natural discipline of noble affections and lofty ambitions*, the

only law is equality of all men and women in their eligibility to avail themselves of the good of God and Nature, and the only true salvation and veridical consummation is the liberation of all possible loves, human and divine.

Sri Krishna is Our Love and Love of Love, Our Life and Life of Life

Love lives in the hearts of all and runs from heart to heart with increasing power of life and movement, with expanded sensibilities and faculties and with eager desire for more and more of such heart-combinations and love-unions. Sri Krishna is the Universal Heart whose life enlivens the life of all, whose light illuminates and holds up the vision of infinity to every observing eye that sees with sympathy and seeks with sincerity. One touch of Sri Krishna's heart makes us akin to the whole world; the remembrance of His abiding presence is enough to carry us safe through eternity in buoyant joy of ennobling company; the memory of His music and His many deeds of love are the magic cures for the wounds of life, for the many disappointments, regrets and ills, that ply their ravenous beaks at the bleeding heart. Life is healed of all its sores and sourness, the heart is filled with immortal nectar, hopes are transmuted into deathless certainties, when our inmost

being and individual aspirations, our momentary pulsations and ever reviving ambitions, our sacredest trusts and holiest holy faiths, are entrusted in Krishna, are indistinguishably mixed and merged in Krishna's Personality. When our cares are His cares His power becomes our own, when we lose ourselves in Him He comes back to us along with our full developed selves, He takes us on His shoulders when we lift Him on our feet, He runs for our purposes when we walk in His company, He watches over us when we are asleep if we keep Him in our heart—Krishna is the ever throbbing heart and unbroken identity of our own selves, Krishna is the ever aspiring soul of us and eternal realisation which requires the instant surrender of our body into the growing fire of experience.

THE HOLY MEDITATIONS OF HUMBLE VIDURA

In Contemplation of the Divine Lord of Love

I

All Holy, Holy, Holiest Lord! He honoured me with a visit to my humble hovel and partook of my poor fare from my earthen plate. He took from these outcaste hands of mine what I proffered Him with love, He took from my heart what it poured overfull, He tasted of my dish with divine joy of relish and He sought with begging eyes and tears for more and more, more than my soul could ever give from its inmost hive and refection-store.

II

All Merciful, Merciful, Most Mighty Lord! He loves me with honour and respect as is due to a king, He treats me right royally for all my humility, He hearkens to my words with dignified attention and defers to my views as though in loyal duty bound.

He, the King of Kings, loves me with the authority of eternal power and His love crowns my humble head with glory. He beckons me to be a king, the ruler and emperor of Heart's unbounded empire; He assures me of my legal claims to such a lofty throne and He Himself lifts me on His hands and shoulders to the Resplendent Seat of Righteousness. Humble Vidura is content to live and die without a crown and throne and yet my Divine Lord insists on my being anointed by His Adorable Tears of Love!

III

Weep not my Lord for love of me. Think not my heart is beggar-born and that my soul is bereft of all ennobling thoughts and elevating ambitions which are supposed to be the birthright of the sitters on high bejewelled thrones. I am not content to be for ever the despised, servile Sudra; I cling not to slavery as a safe means of satisfying my stomach; I loathe to serve vile kings and vicious priests who profane all things holy by their impure touch of flesh and garb of hypocrisy—ay, I would rather be the starving victim of savage discontent than be a well-fed slave who has no heart and will of his own. Who despise me, let them improve themselves and earn mastery of their own mind and body without making slaves of other men and women. Who thinks low of my caste, let him realise whether his mortal flesh is of a better mould and cast, let him rub the

gold of his heart on the touchstone of experience and judge himself before the mirror of conscience whether he is the earthly god he assumes himself to be. I envy not the kings and priests their high status and worldly profits. I hold none rival to my ambition and I desire not the costliest diadem when my heart is privileged to be in kinship with the King of Love. I taste not the sweets of the earth when the nectar of my Lord's lips are mine by touch of friendliest kiss. His love overfills and my Lord's Love is my eternal empire and unfading crown.

IV

I am my Lord's Host through day and night, my heart is ever employed in His domestic and divine service. To feed Him who is the Fact of all Faiths with more of heart's elemental food, to nourish Him who is the Nature of all Nature with more of natural loves and undressed affections, to appease Him who in the Appetite of All Adorable Loves, to invite Him who is the Inspiration of every incoming breath, to welcome Him who is the Well-Being of all mankind, I hold myself in readiness and wait at the door of my heart's gate and forward looking hope through every instant of swift announcing time.

V

The guest of my heart is Himself the Host of all Hospitality and unbounded Mercy. The Friend of

my expectations is the Inseparable Companion and Object of all hopes and observations, aspirations, and inventions, adventures and discoveries, ideals and realisations. The Visitor to my soul is the veritable Life of Life, the virtues of all things as they are, the consummation and crown of all success, the treasure-house of righteousness and the garden of all good and godliest growths. He is the Flower whose fragrance is the living breath of life and He is the Joy whose enjoyment absorbs all energy and appreciative sense. The Bringer of Blessedness, His Blessings wash all sins and stains of life, all taints of birth and ills of the flesh, all distempers and diseases, sorrows and shames of unnumbered and unnamable kinds. The Lord Benefactor, He exchanges His purple robes for my torn rags of poverty; He pours His heart's blood to heal the wounds of my life; He amputates His limbs to supply me with new limbs; He grafts Himself into the frail heart of mine, cuts His own heart in two to give place to my half and clings to my mortal flesh with the divine assurance of inborn divinity.

VI

Doth God live only to approve the strong? Are success and power the supreme rule of life? Is ignorance of the illiterate their most heinous sin? Is efficiency the only road to salvation? Is inequality

the eternal law? Doth Heaven live to obey the lords of the earth? Doth God Almighty in His Divine Majesty reign but to confirm what the princes and prelates arrogate to themselves and ascribe to their own person? The Wheel of Birth, are not all its spokes of equal distance and importance? Are the Brahmin and Kshatriya births gilt-knobed spokes that protrude outside the rim and hold up their heads in metallic pride? Do they revolve the less, and go up and down the less, along with the Universal Wheel? Who set the Wheel in motion? Who stops it, steers it, holds control over it? Or is it the Implacable Wheel of Fate that reels and revolves knowing not why it does so and still circles round and round, heedless of all prayers, entreaties, ascetic practices and priestly propitiations? Is breaking away the only deliverance from the Wheel of Destiny and do wheels break at the building of the spokes? Confound, confound, oh Lord, such vicious reasoning that makes of Heaven and Eternal God a toy and tool of earthly advancement, a magician to play the unscrupulous tricks of the aggressive, a partisan of the powerful, a parasite of the learned, a slave of the subtle-tongued—let such false reasoners be condemned in their own learning! Such knavery of the heart steals its own life-blood, such pride of flesh freezes the genial flow of life, such false arguments cure not the ills of life but only help to extend the stomach's girth of such blasphemers

and load them more heavily with mortal corporeal covering.

VII

O Lord, deliver me from the doctrine of sin and suffering, from the dogma of Past Karma and Rebirth. Confute my cunning when it seeks to justify the thousand ills of the earth in the name of a revengeful Punisher! O Thou Father, Mother, Brother, Sister, Author of all our being, Thou the Life's own sensibility of pain and anguish, the Universal Heart whose every fibre is instinct with the experience of mankind's hopes and fears, dost Thou take delight in bleeding the hearts of men, is Thy Government one of eternal and ever recurring punishments? Are whips and scourges Thy only weapons of redemption? Didst Thou not create the nerves that wriggle? Are Thine the hands that lacerate the living flesh and where livest aloof Thy All-feeling Heart the whilst Thou whipst with many multiple limbs? Or sayest Thou: "Life's breath of Love and Mercy alone is Mine. I live with every life in the sanctuary of its heart and load Myself with the fruits of all experience. Mine is the care of all life, the instinct to preserve and persevere, the energy to prevail and progress, the ambitious adventure, the unexpected success or failure, the keenest disappointment and the greatest victory. I am the Great Highway and

Artery of Life that is ever stirred with the least movements of the littlest living things. I am the Boundless Ocean of Existence whose waters are ever ruffled with the breath of ever blowing desire. All streams of life coloured red, blue or bright, all experiences mixed of the most complex elements, all flow to My Heart's Sea from where I send nothing but the sweet showers of rain and the purest drops of love's tears."

VIII

O God of my love, guest of my soul, Thou Light of Conscience that irradiates the whole universe and interpenetrates the heart of the least, least particle, Thou glorious Mirror of Consciousness which holds to our face the Vision of the Eternal-Infinite and the image of our own looking and reflected face, O Worker, Maker, Witness and Judge, O Law-giver above all Laws, O Merciful One whose almighty throne is enthroned in the hearts of all moving beings, make me Thy Bondsman of love rather than of pride, revolve me round and round Thy Moving Heart that I may grow the more rich and beautiful, feeding on Thy Heart's Nectar. I seek not a liberation and running away from Thee, I know not any salvation superior to love, I desire not a heaven higher than Thy Heart, I cling to Thee even as a child to its mother's breast—O throw me not away,

let Thy Throbbing Heart never break! Do let me enter Thy Heart's Inside and run about in the full freedom of Time and Space; let me live there for ever unconscious of anything else, unaware of any other existence but Thy Heart. The Kingdom of Heaven is there, the richness of all existence and eternal growth, the echoes of every music sung, the reflection of every sight and joy experienced—all, all, are there, are there! O God who seeks of all hearts their living experiences, O Gardener of human souls and gatherer of life's fruitful, fulsome throbs of love, take me to Thy Heart's eternal store, feast me within Thy Heart's Palace, lift me, Mukunda, to Thy Heart's Pot of Plenteous Love!

IX

Perish all opacity that permits not the light of God. Crumble to dust the hard crust of the Earth by the gentle flow of Love's waters. Dissolve all pride in the burning fire of divine thirst for more and more. Let not our bodies bloat with the putrid waters of the fen and marsh, let not our hearts stagnate and refuse to feed life with the burning streams of purple blood. Let all experience engender more of human blood and chyle, more of sweet kindliness, more of brotherly strength and sisterly sentiment, more of motherly sacredness and fatherly faith, let all living hearts live by the milk

and sugar of organic loves, let them bind themselves with the ligaments and sinews of growing, cohering loves, let them move round and round the very same Universal Heart and join hands and hearts, cells with cells, bodies with bodies, souls with souls, and dance round the Divine Heart of Joy! Let every man be the Guest and Host of all his brothers and sisters, let our homes be open to every stranger, let our hearts welcome every noble suggestion and let our hopes invite every possible throbbing experience. Let our strength be in our sympathy, our softness in our susceptibility to good, let our humility be in our readiness to honour those to whom honour is due, let our greatness be in seeking godliness and let that alone be godliness to us which produces eternal growth of Love.

X

All Holy, Holy, Holiest Lord! All Lovely, Lovely, Most Lovable Lord! All Heavenly, Heavenly, Infinite—Eternal God! There is no God but Love, there is no Heaven but Heart and there is not any heart-born love but goes to the making of the Godliest God of All Loves.

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